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M A R Y.



MARY,

▲

DAUGHTER OF THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HIGHLAND SPORTS AND PASTIMES," "EXMOOR," "BROOKLANDS,"

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

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M A R Y,
A DAUGHTER OF
THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

CHAPTER I.

What is freedom ? you can tell—
That which slavery is too well,
For its very name has grown,
To an echo of your own,

“SUCH people as live here and hereabouts,
methinks,” said the delegate, “would scarcely
listen to reason, so I must trudge onwards and
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have a word with squire Winter, as he terms himself. A gentleman farmer, forsooth.” “These are the fellows—corn is too high or too low—oats too cheap or too dear—weather too fine or too hot. Hay and straw ever too plentiful or too scarce—give them a farm for nothing—rent is too high—no food for the cattle, though the grass should grow as luxuriantly throughout the year as in the month of May. These are the lads for perseverance and content—and yet whoever heard of farmers failing. Protectionists, forsooth, they protect themselves at the expense of their neighbours. Good reason have they for not complaining, who feed on the fat of the land—while the hard working mechanics starve—equal rights say I, Jacob Clarke, and a fair division of labour, let free trade arrive and these gentlemen farmers must share and share alike with others and exert themselves.

“But who have we here, why my friend of the Passmore Arms, I declare; well lad, and how

goes it with you this morning, and whither in in such a hurry ; come along lad, and show me the way to Squire Winter's, I desire a word or two with that honoured agriculturist—and none so well acquainted as you are, methinks, with the interior of his domicile—while we are walking there however, let me ask you what are your pursuits and occupations ; are you one of the contented rural class, or of the idle class. The latter, if I err not—never mind, out with it—let me hear your whole history—it will serve to scare away this dense fog, which still appears to hang on the waters of the valley. Do you fish, boy, for trout or minnows—or fly at higher game—one of these fair Winter girls. You say nay to piscatorial pursuits. But come, what of the old gentleman who lives in yon vast mansion—he is rich and despotic I presume—proud perchance, and has little to spare for the poor—I fancy when you meet him you stand hat in hand or knee deep in mire to make way for his steed. Doubtless he

imagines he does you a favour in thus accepting your services, rare minds have these rich lords of the creation. But come, boy, open your mouth and let me have your thoughts and opinions of things in general—and particular, for since I left my native city I have scarce heard a word but of contentment—thanks for the gifts of God, and benefits conferred by man. As if men, at all events men of the rural districts, did not prey on one another as ravenous wolves. The rich on the poor—the high on the low. Man, I tell you, boy, is a lump of self, so we must all look out for number one—no matter who says nay, I tell you we are all born to be equal.”

Now it so happened that Mr. Jacob Clarke was precisely the man to lead astray such a lad as George Radstock, though, to do him justice, whatever the early opinion he had formed, of man’s relative positions here on earth which had been fostered and encouraged by Miss Winter, they were then totally free from

those wild theories acknowledged by his companion. True, in his day dreams he had often wondered why one man should toil all day and another ride in a coach—true that he had often wished that it might have been his fate to live in idleness at Lindford Hall, on the luxuries of life instead of under a thatched roof, with bare necessaries; and at times, young as he was, a sort of liking for Gelica Winter, similar to that of a favorite slave for his mistress, which could scarcely be called love, had induced him to entertain the hope that could he but place himself in a higher position to that in which he was now he might at all events aspire to her hand; and to do him but justice, had he received a proper education his natural abilities were of that order, which by honesty and perseverance could have raised him in the world's estimation as in his own. Yet his was the very period of life when a ruling guide was required to direct and instruct—a pure and friendly heart to advise, and correct with

judgment—and he had none—the loss of a parent—whose origin though so humble, had, nevertheless made himself respected and esteemed by all the neighbourhood was his greatest misfortune; and he was left with a brother totally ignorant in all matters save the digging of a potato ground or the reaping of a corn field; and for him the bread of life was all he sought, he was contented with his humble lot, and he had neither ambition or education to seek to better it; while the mother of George Radstock was a poor woman like the generality of such mothers in rural districts, fond faithful and uncomplaining, hard working, and industrious slaves, nothing more; they love their children as an animal loves its young, at times it would appear with somewhat less affection, if ones eyes deceive us not when passing through a rural village where a child playing, unconscious of danger, is sometimes strung, as were it a sack from under the wheels of a passing coach. Nevertheless, as long as it lasts there

is no love to compare with it—it is their life, there is nothing in comparison.

Alas how few, how very few who live in a different sphere can read aright such parental feelings—in their earliest years they leave the parental roof for school—from school to college—or to enter a profession, be it what it may—many are exiles for years in India, or elsewhere, some indeed ere they are grown to manhood, leave the dearly loved home of their childhood, to pass a life in foreign climes to return as strangers to the roof tree. Their mother and their sisters with whom they have first learnt to kneel in prayer, with whom they have gambolled in infantine delight, are gone, dispersed, or dead and forgotten—while the parents, if still alive, are aged, and although they may fancy their love is still as devoted as at that hour when, with heavy hearts they bade the last farewell—believe me such is not the case.

The hour that sees a family separated and take flight into the world's wilderness, is

the last that ever witnesses them in reality, allied — much love may, thank God, does exist, in after life, between parents and children, brothers and sisters—and with some few though the virtue is rare, long years of absence and separation, makes the heart grow fonder—still this is more a feeling between lovers than blood relatives—for with the latter it is no longer the fresh and beautiful feeling which exists in early life, and with less refinement lingers in the cottage home—in their case families are rarely parted—daughters may grow up and marry, sons advance to manhood, and become fathers, but these matters tend by no means to separate rural hearts; but rather as it were to unite the whole into one large village community—all living, if not precisely under the same roof, yet within daily, nay hourly association, leading to one common feeling of friends and protectors — onwards they walked, young George and his tempter—a tempter with the word liberty on his lips, and the wildest despot-

ism which satan could whisper in his heart ; little cared he for the people's cause, a favorite expression which he professed to advocate. If so, why endeavour to teach those who were happy, that their happiness was comparative slavery—little cared he for the patriotism he preached, or the eye which wondered over the splendid pasture land, the rich luxuries of the woods, looked on the flowery meads, and park lands, and sparkling river, would have told the heart to bend the knee in thankfulness to God, who had so blessed his country with peace and plenty, than have endeavoured for selfish views and on selfish grounds alone, to make that Paradise of peace, and of contentment, one of sorrow and misery—union of labour—union of opinion forsooth with such men as these. Pity they could not be exterminated from English earth to colonise a land where they might have all they wished—the settlement of equality and equal division of property would soon be distinctly understood. For physical

force among them, which here, in merry England, happily they dare not resort to, though they would if they dared, and all their preachings for peace, will never convince reasonable men to send a few of these universal suffrage gentlemen to colonise an island, and they will soon prove that their very pretended patriotism is the very acmé of despotic feudalism—the very worst of feudalism being that which enables the strong to subdue the weak; they will prove themselves a mere set of savages, acting under the garb of liberty—which liberty would show itself as in olden days, a division of property might be made; but the strongest would soon put his hand on the portion of the weakest, till one man possessed the whole, he might then say—

I am lord of all I possess,
My rights there are none can dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

This is precisely the physical force they would like to use ; but they dare not ; their first aim, therefore, is to make the contented discontented, the happy miserable, that their ranks may be well filled ; but, be assured, the mind alone can ever aspire to high things, and that mind, if well regulated, will never lead men to be char-
tists. If anything more than another could convince these misguided men that their objects are not only both unconstitutional and absurd, but also intensely erroneous and selfish towards themselves as their country, and still more so to the industrious working classes, it is the undisputed fact, that real patriotism fills the hearts of high as well as low, of rich and poor, with the noblest feelings—feelings which lead to the noblest acts of Christian charity. Let them recollect their preposterous attempt at the April meeting of 1848—let them recollect, that on that occasion, the peer and the commoner—master and servant—rich and poor—strong and weak—the highest—the noblest

—the richest—the proudest in the land, stood side by side, with the well-conducted and much respected tradesmen and artisans, when their country's cry was heard, with but one opinion, and with but one object, forgetting all else but that they were Englishmen—husbands of English women—fathers of English children—men with warm hearts and honest minds, and as such they went forth, to protect the throne, their homes, and the property of all men ; and he who now claims the dignity of Emperor of that great nation, France—the chosen leader of the people—then forgot he was a stranger in the noble appreciation of real liberty, which is to support the law and the crown against a misguided set of traitors to their country.

Such acts as these constitute patriotism—such acts as these shew the real freedom and happiness in which we live—such acts as these do more to uphold England in the estimation of other lands, as well as in the hearts of the

people of England, than all the chartism in the world.

Ere Jacob and his companion had arrived near farmer Winter's homestead, the sun made its way through the clouds, and shone forth in all its glory on hill and vale, spire and cottage in the distance ; the river, winding and sparkling in the sun's rays, seemed to glide, like a serpent, unconsciously on through the splendid vale. And as the walkers tarried to rest as they strolled up the hill, George, with that enthusiasm natural to youth, as well as to one who lives in the county, forgot, for a moment, the seditious sentiments with which his mind had just been filled, and asked his companion whether the scene he looked on was one that led him to imagine the people who inhabited it were so wretched or so despised as he had stated.

"Moreover," said George, with much simplicity, "I have heard talk of the beauties of London—as if there was anything near that

great city to compare with the vale of Lindford."

"Nonsense, lad—nonsense, lad ; you do not understand these things ; you see each spring the primrose bloom in the hedge-row, and yonder stream glide on unruffled. You have looked at it all your life ; but you know nothing of the heart of man—that blooms but to wither from the oppression of those whose duty it is to listen to the wants of others ; and as for the country, it is all very well for philosophers, and naturalists, and farmers, who are required to grow corn, and make hay ; but man in his dignity—man in his refinement—man to see life, must come to London. And by-the-bye, lad, Miss Winter—your particular Miss Winter, understand me, or both these girls, I fancy you told me—are there now. You are lost in these rural regions of bacon and cabbage. I see you have already a mind aspiring to more than cows and sheep, crows picking up farmer Winter's seed, and opening

gates for the great man up yonder at the hall ; so pack up your knapsack, say farewell, for a time, to this sweet Auburn, and trudge with me ; you will find we are agreeable companions by the wayside, and I will, not only pay your expenses to the great city, but introduce you to a few friends on your arrival, who will be happy to receive you—we must have young heads on young shoulders, and yours contains more than you yet wot of yourself ; but here we are at Squire Winter's—pray knock, and enquire for the gentleman."

But this was scarcely necessary ; for the farmer, having observed two persons enter his garden, left the inspection of his pig-feeding, and approached the visitors from the interior of his well-stocked farm-yard.

"Good morning, George. good morning, lad," said Mr. Winter, "who may be your companion ?—pray walk in, sir, and welcome. What may be your business ?"

"My business, Squire," said Jacob, "is

soon told," using the appellation of squire from the knowledge his quick perception had already enabled him to gain of his listener's weakness and vanity. "My business is soon told—I have heard that, with the exception of the great Mogul, who lives up on yonder hill, you are the greatest landholder here and hereabouts—and my object is solely to learn, for purposes tending to the welfare of my country, what is the real state of the agricultural districts. I therefore stumbled, by chance, during my perambulation, on this sequestered spot—on which, by-the-bye, you appear to have selected a most charming residence—if I may make so bold as to give my opinion; but, doubtless, rents are low—poor-rates equally so—landlords obliging, and labour cheap."

"Why, as to that, we are well enough, though I cannot exactly say that labour is so cheap, or rents so low; but I have a bit of property of my own, do you see—a freehold—in addition to the acres I hold from Squire

Passmore ; so all things considered, we do well enough, and have something to spare. Let me offer you a bit of something to eat, after your walk—a cut of boiled beef, or a slice of bacon—the beer is reckoned good in this county—at all events, pray take a glass of sherry, or a drop of brandy-and-water, the mornings are cool.”

“Well, Squire Winter, I have no objection to taste your spirits, for I have a long walk before me ere nightfall, and the good folks of Lindford have no notion of spirits, I can assure you ; beer—beer—everlasting beer, which they drink in quantities almost incredible.”

Mr. Jacob evidently forgot his share in the consumption ; however, the brandy was produced, he mixed himself a strong tumbler—made himself at home, as he would have done desired or not, and then turned again to the farmer.

“Well, sir, I see you are given to beer also—cannot say I like it. But the people

must drink what they can get, ditch-water, if nothing else, is good enough for them ; doubtless your—lord of the manor—drinks something better.”

“By Job,” said Mr. Winter, “I fancy he does too,” laughing aloud, “and if you visit the servants’ hall, you’ll find his ale is double, x. x.”

“And that’s exactly what I conceived to be case, the servants of the great are pampered and over fed, while the poor labourer may starve—this must be reformed. But who is the member of your county, sir? Mr. Delamere ! is he not a staunch, unflinching Tory— a church and state man—one who votes for every oppression—one who tramples on the rights of the people as he would on a stubble field ; do you vote for such a man, Squire ?—do you, I say ?—a freeholder and a landholder vote for such a man as he, if so, you had better pass your word for slavery at once—or let us come back to the days, when a man dared

thrust his sword through the heart of his follower, who forgot to shut the door."

"Why, Mr. What's-your-name, I see you are somewhat hot on these matters—do you intend to stand for the county yourself next dissolution? if such be your intention, far better think before you leap, and go elsewhere, for young Mr. Frederick, up at the hall, will be in the field as soon as he comes of age, moreover, he will be well supported; should he fail, perhaps I may stand myself. Ha, ha. I am a freeholder, and have a qualification, too, I can assure you. At all events, I never voted for our present member, Mr. Delamere, as my good father was alive when he went to Parliament, neither shall I, for I like not his ways."

"And what are his ways, if I may take leave to ask?" said Jacob.

"Why, they are ways that I don't like; he thinks too much of self—he never speaks up

for agriculturists, and he rarely comes hence—he has not been here for years, and when he does, he treats us farmers as if we were we clods of earth. Mr. Passmore is a bit stiff with other folks; but then he is an aged man; if he do not much good, he does little harm, in fact, he takes things pretty easy; and if you wish to know how we get on in this neighbourhood, or wish to write a book about the county, why you may say things go easy here, and we want little change; but should the ould Squire die, things will take a change, that you may depend on it; for young Mr. Frederick—I take it is a rare lad, and a kind one too—he is much liked in the neighbourhood—very much liked.”

“And what are his political opinions?”

“Political opinions, zounds, I should say he had no opinions yet political or otherwise; but he wishes well to all, and has a good will for all, rich and poor. And when he comes into

his fortune, he will spend it liberally among his friends and tenants."

"All very right he should do so; but you, Mr. Winter, you do not advocate Mr. Delamere's opinions; surely, you have opinions; possibly you subscribe to the people's charter."

"The people's charter," exclaimed the freeholder—"the people's charter—I know nothing about charter or chartist; but if so be, you mean those fellows, who are always meddling with other people's affairs, in order to feather their own nests—we want none of them here. And if they come, there is not an honest man in the vale but would rise to turn them out. I tell you, if this lad, who has had the run of my house from his childhood, was to entertain any of your chartist ideas, he should never cross this threshold again. We want no enemies to peace here in the country. All we want is justice. And God's blessings on our labours. Mr. Frederick is a liberal-

mindful gentleman, and a fine lad, and he will attend to the wants of the people, as all men ought to do who possess thousands of acres; but he wants no chartist ideas, whatever they may be. But take another tumbler; whatever your opinions, I shan't quarrel with them, every man should be listened to, so you are welcome, chartist, or whatever else you may be; here, George, hand over the bottle."

Mr. Jacob deliberately proceeded to mix himself another stiff glass, and having wetted his lips, and found it to his liking, he proceeded—

"So you do not understand the meaning of chartist, then the sooner you are enlightened the better—for the times, sir, are advancing—yes, sir, advancing—and all men must keep pace with them. And you will live to see these chartists whom you profess to denounce, sooner or later guide the helm of state, and then all men being equal, all will be happy."

"Be dashed if I shall, or be dashed if they

will," said Farmer Winter, losing his usual good humour and becoming heated. "Englishmen know better than trust the guidance of the State to such as they. And as for all men being equal, I tell you, it is only right that they should be in the eye of the law, as are they in that of God; but I should like to know how my land would be tilled, if all men were equal. Why, I should have old Mick Coddington, or his honest, hard-working son, telling me to sow my own turnips, and reap my own corn — then perhaps they would take a liking to one of my fat pigs. No, no, if you came up here to teach us such ways as those, better take your glass and be off—my men are steady and hard working—I pay them fair wages, and do them justice—I seldom complain of them, and they rarely complain of me. If you like to take a walk over my farm, and look at the stock, or my young colts, I shall be happy to show them to you, and you may tell all the world what you have seen; but if you

came here to talk chartism to me, I must needs wish you good morning, for I cannot idle away my time."

"Wait awhile, wait awhile, Mr. Winter," said the insinuating delegate, "I cannot leave you with such strange ideas in your head in reference to chartism. All we require is a just representation of the people of Great Britain—in the Commons House of Parliament. From the Lords we have little to hope—Lords and the people are as wide apart as the poles. What we require is—

"Universal Suffrage.

"Equal Representation.

"Registration Officers.

"No Property Qualification.

"Vote by Ballot.

"Annual Parliaments.

"And Paid Members."

"Then, sir, may your wishes never be gratified—for I have sense enough to know, that the people of England, as you call them, that

is, nine-tenths of true and honest Englishmen, will never listen to such balderdash, so you need not preach it here. Go among those who have their friends' goods and chattels in their eye—go to those who would enrich themselves on the miseries not increase the happiness of their fellow creatures. We want no ballot box or annual parliaments here ; so if you will not look at my stock, I must be moving, for it is near my people's dinner hour."

"Well, Squire Winter, I am sorry I cannot reckon you as one of us ; if I presume not, may I ask after the health of your charming sisters, I hear them spoken of in flattering terms in the village. Ladies are all touched with a spirit of liberality towards their fellow creatures ; and they may perhaps induce you to think better on the several points of the people's charter."

"My sisters, sir, are away with an aunt in London, in the New Road, if you know such a

place ; but they know nothing of politics ; talk to them about a dance, you might persuade them to go to it ; speak of a new gown, they would tell you how many flounces this lady and that lady wore at court, for they read such things in the papers ; but they know nothing of chartism ; and were either of them to marry one, I'd turn her out of doors ; and, hark, when you come here again, I shall be glad to speak to you of the neighbouring hounds, or the good duke, or the crops, or the land ; but have a care how you introduce your opinions where no man wants them. Good day, sir, good day, a pleasant journey wheresoever you are bent."

And walking off, he added to himself—

"May I never see your cunning ugly face again, if I do, I shall be induced to set the dogs at you."

As Mr. Winter entered his farm-yard again, Jacob and his companion passed down the

garden, and walked onwards in a direction leading away from the village. I need scarcely add, that George, being now convinced that Miss Gelica Winter was in London, and having an earnest longing to visit the great metropolis, was easily persuaded to accompany his dangerous companion.

CHAPTER II.

“He is worthy of Honour who willeth the good of every man, and he is much unworthy thereof who seeketh his own profits and oppresses others.”

I must pass over the lapse of three years, but a brief space in that permitted for the life of man. And as I do not presume to any sentimental endeavours to place mere facts in flowery language, I shall at once take up the course of events relating to those individuals I have named, where I laid it down. Time has

made them older, and they have changed with the time—but Lindford is, as it was then, still Lindford, in its rural beauty—and Lindford Hall tenanted as it was three years since.

This is saying much, for there is scarcely a day which passes over our existence that we are not startled, saddened, and subdued, by some awful or unexpected event, either more immediately connected with our own direct relations and friends, or with those known to us by public report in the great world, in which all high or low take some part; and it is well indeed that God in His mercy should think fit to remind us, that our time may come next; indeed it would be a happy cause to man did he permit his thoughts to dwell somewhat longer on these sudden warnings which Providence thinks fit to send us—did he do so, he would take these warnings more fairly to his heart, and act with the knowledge that whatever his lot in life, it was solely a temporary

one to be changed for better or for worse, according to his faith.

It was three years since then that Mr. Passmore had retired to rest, after the conversation I have detailed in relation to the sudden demise of the labourer Radstock, and thence referring to the intended travel of his son Frederick. Almost in perfect health when he prayed, God bless his children, and retired to his bed-room, the rising sun found him suffering from severe cold and fever, which ere night increased to an alarming height, and threatened to terminate a life which had been one of unusual peace, and freedom from all physical suffering; born in the midst of all that wealth could give, bred in the midst of luxury and comfort more than man need desire, living in affluence and that in the very centre of all the beauties of nature he had little to look for, nothing to desire—the only severe, mental blow he had

ever sustained, was the death of his wife. Still two lovely and loving children had been spared to him—they were his idols, of them on earth alone he thought, they were all for whom he desired to live. For two long months he struggled against sickness, and more than once death was near at hand; but wealth enabled him to obtain the best advice from London, even when railways were not at hand and telegraphs at work to do the duty of expressers and post-horses, and however exorbitant he could pay for help—one of the greatest blessings which wealth has bestowed on suffering man—for, bear in mind, it is very easy to say to the poor man, which, by the bye, is of daily occurrence, when suffering probably from some torturing, physical complaints—why do you not go up to London and take Dr. Cureall's advice—while another recommends a warmer climate—and another horse exercise or sea air—or bottle porter—or old port—or anything else

which happens to come into their head, for the moment—and this perhaps to a man who has only his half-pay—or to a widow existing on a lieutenant's pension.

Alas! poverty cannot afford to be ill; but when it is so, it is the will of God, and He finds a physician, and provides for all wants—as does He when He thinks fit, bless the efforts of those who aid the rich, as did He in the case of Mr. Passmore—who doubtless would equally have survived had he solely given himself up to the guidance of the village apothecary. Indeed, I well recollect a most dear lady, who was suffering from some throat complaint; her noble hearted husband, being naturally anxious, sent up to London for one who, perhaps, is termed justly an eminent physician, though the eminence of these scientific, professional gentlemen sometimes consists in the number of thousands per annum, they receive, the handsome carriages they ride in, and the fine horses

that draw it — for no one, it appears, who can afford to pay a man who rides in chariot, will submit to be doctored by a man who walks.

However, the M.D., arrived from London by the railway—a pleasant steam of four hours' duration ; a handsome equipage awaited him, he drove to a noble mansion, and was nobly received—saw his patient—prescribed, that is wrote a few lines of hieroglyphics on a sheet of bath-post—dined luxuriously—drank his bottle of claret, and slept soundly—rose early, and enjoyed an agreeable walk in the pleasure grounds—ate some *paté de perigord* for breakfast—stepped once more into the carriage placed at his disposal, drove to the station, and a few hours afterwards, found himself in his own abode, in sufficient time to attend to his London patients.

Previous to quitting the abode where he had been so courteously entertained, the noble host requested to know the cost of the visit.

“ Why, sir,” said the illustrious Doctor of

Medicine, "it is our general custom to charge a guinea a mile for country attendance ten miles beyond the stones of London; as, however, we now gain much time since railways have been established, I think I can scarcely trouble you for more than one hundred and fifty pounds."

This sum was paid, and pocketed—a tolerable sum for writing a prescription, and eating an excellent dinner at another man expense.

A few days afterwards, the lady, being rather the worse for the advice of the London practitioner, was induced to send for the neighbouring village apothecary, who applied a few leeches, which entirely restored her, and probably demanded five shillings in payment; such, however, is the luck of life—wealth begets wealth.

But as I have already said, God blessed the aid provided for Mr. Passmore, and he once more set in his well-cushioned arm-chair, surrounded by those he loved; all save one, and

she, for the time, was absent—that one was our little friend, Mary—three years had made rapid changes in her person, not less so in her mind. And Miss Handley, the ever just, as she was kind, good, and reasonable, had frankly stated to Mr. Passmore, on his recovery, that as he had permitted her to visit at the Hall, to be the playmate of his son and daughter, and to receive instruction far beyond her station, by which instruction her talented mind had enabled her not only to gain the highest advantages, but her own exertions had aided with a power and steadiness far surpassing the usual exertions of girls of her age. She soon displayed powers of mind, which were only to be exceeded by the grace, if not the beauty, of her person.

Mr. Passmore was a just man, moreover when applied to, by no means, covetous of his wealth, though never forward in giving without conviction of some ostensible purpose, when, however, just reasons for giving were made known to him, he gave, and gave

freely. As I have already said, Miss Handley, ever just as she was kind, did show reason, and just reason, why those means should be forthcoming for the welfare of one, whom she very soon learned to love almost as tenderly as her former charge. A woman of strong common sense, and warm susceptibilities, herself, she soon appreciated the gentle manners, affectionate disposition, and high intellect of the humble in birth, though by nature, highly gifted girl, who so tenderly and devotedly returned all her care and affection, and not the less the attention and generous conduct of those amongst whom she had been permitted to dwell; she daily watched her beautiful character and high mind, and equally commiserated the struggles which must be hers, were she permitted to return to scenes and associates, from which nature had made her far superior.

The greatest beauty of that character, how-

ever, evinced itself in the devotion to her aged and humble parents, revolting to her feelings, as was the coarseness of manner, vulgarity of mind and conduct, with those among whom she naturally came in contact, during her repeated visits to the very simple roof, under which she had first seen the light of day.

I may be accused of drawing of a fictitious character ; to some it may appear absurd, that one born beneath the roof of thatch, should grace in person, though this be a secondary consideration, yet doubly so in mind, the halls of wealth, luxury, and rank. Nevertheless, I draw my picture from the life—as it may be drawn every day from similar models—for while the mind of man may rise above that of his fellow man, in whatever sphere of life the race from which he came, that of woman exalts woman still higher in all that is feminine, and noble, and generous, combining that which goes to the very heart and taste—a beautiful simplicity and humility, which, even with a

thorough knowledge of her acquirements, never permits her to exult over her fellow beings, never induces her to vaunt herself; but rather tends to make her delicacy of feeling as of action more delicate—her appreciation of benefits received more strong—while her affection for those who have raised her to the just position, which her mental acquirements entitled her to, becomes ardent and devoted, without one spark of humiliating conduct, from which her high mental refinement would shrink.

Man, whatever his genius, without he be well born, can never aspire to this, though being well born, he may often bely his cast—woman, with mind, ever may, without it never.

And such was truly the character of Mary Coddington; born in the cottage of the labourer, from her infancy in occasional contact with those above her in birth and education, even in her very youth, she had already

learnt to cast off many of those habits natural to her position ; when invited to the residence of Mr. Passmore, however, in daily association with his children—learning what they learned—living as they lived—watched over, in the first instance, by the tender care of Miss Handley, who early discovered the hidden treasures God had vouchsafed to her—she soon made her own path easy, and the humble girl quickly became alike the cherished and loved companion of the whole family, and the respected and honoured guest to the household.

Miss Handley, however, was early convinced that her position if not an unenviable one at the moment, might be so hereafter. Mr. Passmore had already been on the point of death, and his demise would change the whole course of events at Lindford Hall.

Frederick, his son, was not as yet of age—and even as the companion of his sister, under such circumstances, she could scarcely remain at the Hall. Moreover, he was as handsome,

affectionate, and high-minded as herself; and having entirely forgotten their relative positions in life, from the habit of constantly receiving her and living with her as a sister—or even had he thought of it, never, for a moment, allowing such thoughts to enter his mind; he already loved her as fondly, and treated her as respectfully and kindly, as had she been the first born in the land.

Miss Handley, however, like most sensible people, looked forward rather than backward; and she thus reasoned—

“Two such beings as these—and God knows—dearly as I love that high-minded youth, as truly is my heart inclined to that darling cottage girl—young as they now are, a few years will make a wide difference—they cannot fail to love each other with very different feelings, and then will come the struggle between poverty and wealth—the high and the lowly born. Not that I fear dear Frederick, he is too like his beloved mother, ever to allow

any feeling, if sanctified by justice and honour, to interfere with mere worldly forms ; where he loves, there will he wed ; but hitherto, almost shut up in this old mansion, when at home, he has seen little of life—at least, of female society. It is well he should, at once, travel, or go to college ; and as for Mary—dear girl—her happiness must not be forgotten. As on her death-bed, I vowed to their dear mother, so will I do my duty to her much loved children—and to this dear girl, for the sake of her own sweet self.”

With such sentiments, and with such a woman as Miss Handley, they were no sooner formed than acted on. She found the convalescent seated in his accustomed arm-chair ; but the many who had been around him on the last occasion, when he entered that well curtained and luxurious room, were not there ; for the dinner over, Miss Handley, much to the old gentleman’s amusement, proposed that she should remain, and take young Frederick’s

place in the discussion of the claret, while he retired to chat with the girls.

“ Well, Miss Handley, this is very kind of you, pray let me offer you a bumper to begin with, ha, ha, ladies like claret—and you know mine is reckoned first-rate, a perfect bouquet and body too, none of your *vin-ordinaire*, some of your pure good wholesome claret, which Withers tells me is better for me than my celebrated port—but I prefer port—the drinking of it too is a good old English custom which I trust may never be eradicated from the rural districts, whatever may be the pleasure of the Londoners ; but I am now on the claret system, so here I drink your very good health. But I see you have something more important to discuss than our neighbours’ vintage—so pray name it, you have all my attention.”

“ You judge truly, Mr. Passmore, “ I do desire to speak to you on the subject of the dear girl whom you have so kindly permitted should

receive the same instruction as your daughter ; you are aware what rapid progress she has made in those studies, and equally must you be aware how much changed both in mind, manner, and grace, she has become, since she first came to reside under your roof. I may add that while on the one hand her genius and admirable disposition has caused me to take a deep interest in her welfare, she has not the less inspired me with a sincere affection for her personally, an interest and affection not the less felt for my beloved pupil, your own daughter, or the son of her to whom in her life-time you know me to have been so deeply attached. It is to this girl's position that I wish to call your attention ; she is now surrounded by kind friends who love her, attended by a household whom her admirable disposition has made respect her, and living in the very hot bed of all that wealth can grant or affection offer, and yet within two miles of that home—where she nightly lays her head to sleep, pillowed in luxury—those who

claim her as their child are, still what that ill-disposed man whom we are told has recently visited the village, calls serfs and slaves to the aristocracy. What, sir, will become of this poor girl, should circumstances oblige her to quit this happy home, once more to live among those with whom, putting it out of the question the child's natural love for her parents, she can, have no feelings in unison, no tastes in unison. Indeed it appears to me she has but one career open to her, which is that of preparing her mind in order that she may bestow the fruits of her talents and education on the children of others ; in fact she must become the instructor of youth ; to fit her for such an appointment, however, perhaps of all others the most appalling to an affectionate and sensitive mind, I would intreat you to carry your generosity still farther than you have already and enable, her, at all events for a brief space to receive, at some good school, a more practical and extended education than I

am enabled to afford. This is the first point on which I solicit your goodness; the next is that your son Frederick proceed on his travels. You well know, sir, I should not presume thus unsolicited to offer these opinions, had I not been the friend of her who was so dear to you, as well as the instructress and in heart the second mother of them who are dear to me."

"You speak kindly and well, dear madam," replied Mr. Passmore, and doubtless you are right on these as in most other points, but I do not clearly see why I should drive this poor girl from a home where she is loved. I am getting old and I own she is so much connected with all our associations, and has so much entwined herself around my old heart, that I could not bear to part with her, moreover, my time here on earth may not be permitted much longer. I would scarcely desire that a branch should be lopped from the trunk. True, this girl has so changed since she has been among us that I no longer recollect the little

cottage girl when she appears before me in all the gracefulness of almost early womanhood. Indeed to be frank with you, when I speak to our cheerful Mary, I ever forget she is the daughter of honest old Coddington ; but what of that, her brother has so conducted himself that I have, only yesterday, installed him as my under-steward ; so he has enough for himself and something to spare for his good parents ; and I am not intending to be unjust towards this girl, whom I fancy we have not unwisely removed from her sphere, solely with the view for her prosperity, and you must admit that whatever her birth, her mind is that of a high-bred lady, so let her remain with us, let her remain I say, if she is happy here."

"I speak, dear sir, neither of her birth or her breeding ; whatever the former, vulgar minds could alone revert to it in her presence, for she is in every respect far superior to most of her sex ; neither do I question her present happiness, it is rather to the future that I

look; recollect she is now imbibing all the habits of such a position, which will strengthen as they grow; what may be her fate when you are gone with such habits, such feelings, such recollections, all I ask for her is justice, henceforward as well as now; the love of others she well knows how to gain and how to retain.

“Well, justice she shall have, name what you consider for her future wants, my children, I am well assured, will not begrudge that I give from their wealth a portion to their companion and playmate; but let her remain, I say, for I cannot part with the girl, and neither Freddy or Augusta would desire that I should do so.”

“Assuredly, most assuredly they would not; nevertheless you will agree with me, that for a time, at least, she go; for her own sake, we must make the sacrifice—none will feel that sacrifice more acutely than shall I, but I am satisfied that your kind feelings towards her blind you to her position, and not the less so to that of your son. Yet, dear sir, if Mary, is now

the playmate of your children, and truly such they, are, thank God, in their cheerful affectionate associations, yet recollect that three years have elapsed since you first permitted her to share the school-room of your daughter, and those who were then children in years remain so only in simplicity of mind and frankness. The Eton boy has become the Oxford man, and a man if I err not, who has a heart as warm and noble as he has a mind and genius which will exalt him among men, and gain for him the love of woman. The little rustic school girl as I said before, has become the graceful well-bred lovely woman. Mind does wonders, but rarely does it heal true heart wounds, more particularly if those wounds are inflicted by constant associations in childhood. I therefore ask you, sir, if you have thoroughly made up your mind that the daughter of your honest labourer, Mick Coddington should become the wife of your beloved son, Frederick Passmore. He might, per-

chance, search the wide world and not find a heart so pure and noble as that which beats in the heart of this sweet girl. But I ask again, emboldened by my duty and affection for you and yours, have you made up your mind on this subject, for I never doubted your justice on any other towards her. No, the sooner my plans are adopted the better, so let my adopted daughter, for such she shall be, go to school for a season, and your son will go forth in the world and learn some knowledge of his country and his fellow men, before his career in life is stopped by hastily formed affections."

Men will bear much, and do much, particularly for those they esteem; but touch their pride or their pockets and he who can submit to the one with temper, or open the other generously, is worthy to be called a friend indeed.

Mr. Passmore loved the girl for whom he had done much, whether wisely or not he never thought, for he was ever generous; and

gladly would have given her five hundred a-year for life, had Miss Handley named that sum, for her presence was as necessary to him as his pet dog or his accustomed arm chair, and as for touching his pocket it might truly be touched to some extent, without any material injury. But the idea of a daughter of one of his poorest labourers becoming the wife of his son, and mistress of Lindford Hall, was an event which never for a moment, entered his head; and why so, because he would as soon have thought of his marrying his grandmother—far more so. Thus Miss Handley at once carried her point, not without sorrow, however, to the old gentleman, far greater sorrow to his daughter, and annoyance as well as sorrow to his son.

Now it may be recollected that on the night previously to Mr. Passmore being taken ill—it was determined that Frederick and his tutor, Mr. Eden, should soon commence their travels; these travels were postponed for two reasons,

the one from the fear of any relapse taking place in the constitution of one in advanced age, and on re-consideration, the advantage which Frederick might derive from a college education at Christ Church ; therefore was he entered as a gentleman commoner, and although he neither received or obtained a first class for which he had far more than the required talent, he managed to become well acquainted with all the best authors ; although he did not devote his days and nights to slavery, and sometimes to that everlasting ruin of their health, which many do, solely to obtain one object, he was very far from being an idle man. He preferred obtaining a general knowledge of worldly matters, history, ancient and modern, with no mean proportion of classics ; rather than pass his whole period of University education in bending over classical lore, to become a first-class. Not that I presume to question the honour or the difficulty required to attain such object ; yet without fear of con-

tradiction, I may assert, though my once beloved father stood in that position. A position honoured by such names as Canning and Peel yet, among the many who have attained it, how few, how very few there are who have ever in after days come prominently forth as useful members of the legislature, or who have ever done ought to prove that such an object gained, one purely classical, has been the ground-work of future usefulness to their fellow men.

Frederick, however, was by no means one who looked on a residence at college solely as a means under the academical garb of learning, to pass his mornings in hunting, and his evenings in supper giving; far from it, though like other youngmen of fortune he delighted in field sports; but he enjoyed them as real pleasures, not as a means of passing time—and he formed some additional acquaintances in his own station, and of his own order, who united in friendship at college, met again in the halls of the noble

and aristocratic, and sat side by side in the commons house of parliament, as useful and honoured members of the legislature.

If Frederick Passmore, therefore, gained no double first-class at the University—at all events he gained the respect and esteem of many of his fellow collegians, and when he left Oxford, he carried with him the regrets of many, and the character of a high bred, warm-hearted and talented English gentleman.

This period, between that of boyhood and manhood passed at college, however, had made rapid changes both in the mind and person of Frederick Passmore—handsome and intellectual as had been the countenance of the Eton boy, that of the young academician was stamped with thought, and genius; yet so open, so mild, that the very inward workings of his heart might be known to those, who, with the eye of love watched its various changes, changes rapid as the thought which passed through his brain, the truth of which carried conviction

from the working of his mouth ; kindness and gentleness, yet, with all decision and manliness. A character like his, indeed, happily may be often met with ; yet, when it is so, be assured there are few women who could live from day to day beneath the same roof, receiving from him the most brotherly kindness and affection, and that, with a knowledge that he was the son of her patron and protector, who would not cling to him with feelings more akin to love than friendship ; and that love not precisely of the nature which exists between brother and sister—doubly dangerous to the man when the being with whom he is daily associated, has virtues and talents equal, if not surpassing his own ; and if not precisely that beauty which the world delight to look on for the passing hour ; yet loveliness which beams in the countenance of one whose heart is not less true than are her affections. But put on one side all the qualities I have named, both as regards the man or the woman, and I own I should scarcely

desire to call that man my friend who might live almost, from childhood, with such a being, with the feeling that her position was one of entire dependence, the knowledge that although she shared his daily meal—sat at the same board, lived beneath the same roof; was cherished, loved, and esteemed for her inestimable qualities; who, with such knowledge—had he not possessed one of the kindly and noble feelings which lay so thickly in the heart of the son of him whose bread she ate—but would have treated her with manly kindness and generosity.

From Frederick, however, the young Mary, even when previous to her becoming an inmate of the hall, indeed, when she roamed wildly, as a village girl, in the park which he would, one day, claim as his own, he was wont to select her from her rustic companions, to say a kind, word or offer her some boyish attention. As he grew up, however, she became his pet and playmate. And even when taken to his home to receive in-

struction, he combined a pleasing tone of rail-lery with his brotherly kindness, and many a wild ride had this spirited lad, and still more spirited girl over hill, and down dale, in the lovely park of Lindford, and the neighbourhood, accompanied by the beautiful Augusta; their constant attendant, a noble hound, who roaming free all day, with the girls, or his young master, was permitted in the winter evenings, to stretch his graceful limbs on the hearth, whether of dining-room, or drawing-room.

On each occasion, however, as Frederick returned from the college vacation, and that his own mind had expanded by a knowledge of the world and its associates, he became more and more alive to its artfulness; delightful, therefore, was the intercourse which he found with those whom he had left in the enjoyment of the woodlands and vales of his own dear home; and the comparisons which his mind formed of the absent and the present, never failed to give

the advantage to the latter—each time that he returned, new, and new charms appeared to have planted themselves in the minds and faces of those he called his sisters—but his heart already told him that her he treated daily with more tenderness and delicacy, which the peculiarity of her position called forth, was no real sister of his—and the more this truth became apparent, the more pleasing was the thought.

It was therefore, evident; at least as far as worldly precaution was considered—a precaution often tending to the direst evils—and in this instance it was correct, that the sooner poor Mary left the hall for a time, or Frederick went forth on his travels the better for both their sakes; such was Miss Handley's honest conviction—a conviction not formed with the most remote intention of paining, but rather with the idea of securing the happiness of two beings among the three who were dearest to her in life.

Miss Handley had gained her point. Mr.

Passmore submitted—but his submission called forth many struggles in his heart and mind which had never entered there before.

Let me see how this old man acted on these thoughts.

Miss Handley having said all she had to say, rose and went to the drawing-room, where Mr. Passmore shortly joined her. It is not very difficult to describe the interior of that most agreeable of all rooms in Europe; the drawing-room in an ancient country house of a rich and well bred gentleman, in the provinces of England. It will be enough to say, for the few who may never have entered such, that therein will be found, if not precisely the gilded lustre of a Parisian apartment—all, and far more of elegance, comfort, and courtliness than will be found elsewhere, or in any country on earth. Neither is it difficult to describe the occupations of the few inmates there assembled, for no stranger was present; Mr. Eden sat in an easy arm-chair, by the centre table,

with spectacles on his nose, that was in immediate contact with the *Edinburgh Review*, that day received, and the wax candles in such close proximity to its pages, as to cause the laughter-loving face of his favorite Augusta to beam with smiles as she sat on the sofa in momentary expectation of an ignition. Augusta held in her hand some work, I can scarcely tell what, for ladies have such innumerable modes of passing an idle hour; this work, however, whatever it was, lay on her lap as she watched Mr. Eden attempts to read, when Miss Handley entered, and sat down by her side. The noble hound, as I before named, a general favorite, was lying on the beautiful soft rug, his accustomed position, while Mary was at the piano, with Frederick standing over her in admiration of her improved mode of playing, and perhaps more so of the beautiful little head which bent to the music, and in watching of the little white hands which ran over the keys; for Mary had learned to play the piano,

not, however, as the Miss Winters played, nor did she learn as they had learnt.

“Come Mary,” said Mr. Passmore, kindly, as he entered the room, and approached the piano, and playfully pulled one of her beautiful little ears; “come Mary, to your duty at the tea-table,” for it was her pleasing custom to preside at that cheerful and feminine occupation. And Mary, poor girl, gratefully acknowledging these marks of almost paternal kindness, rose, and instantly obeyed.

“Well, Fred,” observed the old squire, seating himself by his son, “have you tried the stream to day, the weather has been made for fishermen, and Robert tells me there are some large trout.”

“Yes, daddy, I have,” replied Fred, “and met with some success; but I gave up early, and walked with Winter to look at two young colts he has for sale; by-the-bye, he tells me strange tales of that lad, young Radstock, who left the village some years since; his poor

mother has never ceased to regret the worthless fellow ; you may recollect, he went with a vagabond, who came down here to breed discontent among our people, in which he signally failed ; however, George was bitten by his unwholesome theories, and off he went, without bag or baggage ; one of those foolish girls up at the farm, who have certainly not grown wiser as they grow older, told me they saw him more than once in London ; how he lives, it is impossible to say—from her description, he is totally changed, both in person, manner, and dress, from which I should infer that his present companions or ways are not honest, for, from all accounts, he was not a lad to make his way by industry. However, dear father, I have been thinking, that it will be desirable that Mr. Eden and I soon start on our intended rambles. I am desirous of visiting some of the largest towns in England, as also some of the rural districts, in order that I may gain a knowledge of my country. Should your wishes be, here-

after realised and I enter Parliament; however, I submit myself to your wishes—you well know how happy is my home, and happy ever will be, as long as you and these dear ones are spared to me.”

“You have named a subject, Freddy,” replied Mr. Passmore, “on which I was about to speak to you; it is, Heaven knows, not my wish, save for your own welfare, that you should ever quit me; daily am I becoming more infirm, and none of us can say what the will of God may ordain. Our excellent friend, your dear mother’s friend, Miss Handley, has, however, clearly pointed out my duty, and I must do it, whatever the pang; it would be alike selfish and disadvantageous to you, were I to persuade you to remain buried in the country with me now, dear boy; go hence, the sooner the better, for the sooner I shall have you back; and if you have no desire to visit the continent, go where you will, I pray God spare me to hear all you have seen and done,

and have you return as pure in mind, and as affectionate in heart, as you now are. Recollect, Freddy, when I am gone, you will have a large estate to control—may you be permitted to prove more worthy than I have been—great are the advantages of such a charge, if properly directed—but evil are the effects if wantonly and improperly squandered; with this estate you will also be the master, as may you be the friend and benefactor, of some hundreds of your fellow creatures; had I to live another life, my acts towards them, perhaps would be far different, than, they have been, for I feel, too truly, the more we have, the more is required at our hands by the Lord and Master of us all. The times, however, are greatly changed since I first learnt to know myself possessed of a large landed estate, and they are daily changing more and more. Your position, my dear boy, will therefore be somewhat more difficult than mine has been; for a people, now comparatively contented, will

learn to know their strength—may we hope that such knowledge may be used to turn their force against those who ought, even if they do not, study their wants, and secure for them the well merited price of their labour; at all events, I cannot blame myself on these grounds, for although I may not personally have sought their homes, and listened to their wants, I have, at least, never refused a helping hand when I have been properly informed as to the nature of my people's sufferings."

"No, my dear father, you never have," said Frederick, "warmly, and although there are many, who will always complain, and probably have reason for so doing! yet are there many more who do so on no grounds at all; and, at all events, your people here are as happy as can be reasonably expected, kindly and fairly remunerated."

"Well, I trust it may be so, my son; but we have already seen what ill effects the voice of one man may do, who seeks to scatter evil

advice and unsound views into the hearts and minds of an ill-educated rural population: Since Mr. Jacob Clarke visited my estate, Robert tells me the people are continually talking of the luxuries of the rich—the miseries of the poor—the ill-paid for work—and bad, hardly earned pittance—such things were never breathed of before that man put foot into the village of Lindford—even Symthe's beer—I am told they assert is not so good as it was wont to be—and my farmers, who are all low rented on my estate, and who formerly were the first to speak in terms of pride of the stock of game they could show, if a day was named for a sporting party on their lands—now send in large claims to Robert for damages done to their fences; the hares, they say, not only feed on their crops, but break their fences. And one man went so far as to say that the thousand pounds I subscribed to build the church at Winderleigh, was mere ostentation—that the people might be told in the papers,

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how Squire Passmore—the rich Squire Passmore—gave more in charity than the Queen; adding — with marked impertinence — that charity began at home, and the money would be better spent among the poor in the parish, or employing more people, or giving larger wages, or lowering the rents—when this very man is paying two pounds an acre for land worth five.”

“All this may be true,” thought Freddy to himself, “still there is some reason in objecting to ostentatious charity, if your former assertions be correct, which doubtless they are.”

“But,” continued the old man, “the termination of the war has changed the whole face of things at home; peace is doubtless the greatest of blessings. Yet war has one good effect, it gives occupation to turbulent spirits, who are now scattered over the face of England, and having no enemies to fight abroad, they have more time to think of them at home; God spare us, say I, from civil discord; but

that vagabond said truly, we must go with the enemies, or, perhaps, be drowned in the flood."

"Well, my dear father, it is but natural, that events should advance rather than retard; and surely you will admit that much reform in the state is required; population is encreasing—science advancing—education improving—here in England, and surely you would not desire that we should stand still and watch the progress of civil and religious liberty in other nations, without making one move to advance our own prosperity. Yet understand me, I advocate no such measures as those which the chartists' delegate has been endeavouring to instil into the minds of our yet peaceful and contented tenants; but I do think it is the duty of all men, in this free and enlightened country, to aid in the advancement and prosperity of her people, by eradicating, as fast as possible, the iron shackles of feudalism, which bound them as serfs to their lords. And to

endeavour, rather by a generous disposal of his wealth, example and consideration, to gain the love and respect of those whom God has placed in a lower grade of society—obtain this end, and you will attain the greatest security for their happiness as well as yours. I have, however, already had some insight into the just complaints of the working classes, and, believe me, they are not all as groundless as those of Lindford; far from it, for extravagant landlords, spend all the wealth they can obtain from their tenants in pursuits unworthy the names they bear, and, in order to supply their extravagance at the gaming-table, or in worse pursuits—if worse there can be—they grind their tenants to the last farthing—the tenants retaliate on the labourers, and where is the helping hand or cheering voice of him, who, blessed with this world's wealth, ought to be the first to mitigate the pangs of the children of the soil; why either far from his home in a foreign land, while the house of his ancestors

once filled with all that was cheerful and gay, is left desolate. The weeds growing in his court-yard, and the beggar knocking at his door in vain—but I am about to leave you for a time, dearest father, not to visit other lands, but to see more of my own dear England; when I return, how joyful will be my lot—with you, my darling sister, and those dear friends around you—again to recur to the subject on which we have now touched, it is one of deep interest to me, as it ought to be to every thinking Englishman, and though there may be a few, yet a very few of the ill-disposed and dissolute, who would desire to destroy the farmer's wealth, or the manufacturer's machine. The midnight incendiary is worse than the assassin in open day, and men, who, whenever they presume to advocate their spirit of chartism with physical force, will be crushed, by the people of England, among whom they are unworthy of being named, as the foot of man would crush a worm."

“Bless you—bless you, my boy ; may your heart ever lead you right, as I fondly believe it will ; but there is another subject, not of our country, but very near our hearth, that I desire to name to you—a subject on which Miss Handley has already pressed me. It is the position of our sweet, young Mary. You know, at the wish of your sister, no less so than yourself, I was induced to take her from her humble home, and place her here as if she were she mine own child. Miss Handley thinks—nay affirms,—that it is a duty to her that she remain here no longer.”

“You astonish me, sir. Whatever has the poor girl committed ?—what can she have done to induce this reasoning ?—never was a mind more amiable than hers—never was a heart more free from guile—never was a creature more gentle and affectionate—or one who felt and expresses more deep gratitude for your generosity and protection ; besides I remember her as my friend and playmate, and she is no less

loved by my sister than esteemed by all who know her."

"True—most true, Fred; and yet can she be ever here? her brother, you will recollect, still holds but a comparative humble position on the estate. I admit his conduct is such, and I hear so well of his abilities and application, that I intend to do more for him hereafter; but, consider, was death to lay his iron grasp on me, could Mary remain here with young Frederick Passmore as the host; even as the bosom friend of his sister.

"I see no reason to the contrary—but pray God you may long be spared to us—we have been the cause that she is in a position which she truly honours, to us it is duty, even were it not a source of happiness to provide for her future comfort; and were I to select among all that I have yet known, who even boast of high blood, and high station—whether gained from the noble deeds of their ancestors, the purest of all aristocracy—or the aristocracy of speculative

wealth, the most vulgar and abhorrent, I must say, that few will ever stand side by side with her, who can be compared in natural grace of person, if not in absolute beauty ; and still more scarce are those who can compete with her in mind. Truly, she may be a rose plucked from the hedge, but a bud has been grafted on the finest hot-house plant, which nurtured in mildness, and fostered with care, has bloomed into life—in almost natural perfection—no, dear father, I see no reason, though I rarely differ from you, why those two loving girls who now sit fondly side by side, in all the tenderness and affection of two sisters, should be parted.”

“ As yet, you have known little of the world, and its realities ; little of the jealousies and envyings, little of its malice and dislike to see any one in a position of happiness—till last night, I was inclined to think much as you do, that there could be no possible reason why the girl whom I had placed under the protection of

my roof, should not remain there in all the peace and contentment which appears to be hers. Moreover, when Miss Handley named to me the necessity of making some provision for her, I was almost angry at the very idea; as I felt confident that one who had daily shared the home of my children for years, would scarcely be left to want when I was gone; but I now think otherwise. And I feel that she was right, and I was wrong; to-morrow I shall settle on her such a provision as I think will be befitting her station in life, and relieve her from the necessity of seeking her own bread in the only way in which a woman of mind and education can seek it, as an instructress to others—A lot from which my heart would gladly spare her—She must go, Frederick, from home, at all events, for a time—I shall be careful to what school she is sent, I shall be equally careful that her every comfort and happiness is attended too, in the selection of those among whom I shall send her.

London, I think will be the best place, the novelty will serve to distract her mind for a season, from these rural scenes, and she will be enabled, under the best masters, to cultivate those talents which she has already proved she possesses. You surely cannot say nay to these arrangements, which are founded on reason. By-and-bye you will receive many of your neighbours and friends at the Hall, and then Mary can visit us, and she may find a husband worthy of her ; unless the heir of Lindford Hall purposes selecting for himself the daughter of Michael Coddington, the day labourer."

And smiling at what he imagined was a good joke, Mr. Passmore rose and approached the tea-table.

Frederick rose also, and followed, but made no reply.

" Well, Mary, dear," said Mr. Passmore, " we have kept you some time, while we have been discussing the affairs of the nation—so now for some tea Well, Eden, what says the

Edinburgh, are the whigs to stand for ever—or tories once more to dispose of the loaves and fishes.”

But Augusta throwing both her hands around his neck, stopped his mouth with a loving kiss, saying :—

“ No politics—no politics, dear dad. If you once start Mr. Eden, he will go off like a rocket ; but explain to me about these railroads, the papers are full of them. They say a railway is actually about to be made from Manchester to Liverpool, is it true—and what is a railway ? Shall we have one, do you think, to Gloucester, or London ? If so, you shall take me to see the sights, for they say, twenty-five miles will be the pace, and I dearly love fast travelling.”

“ Nonsense child, nonsense, Augusta ; don’t you see it’s merely a joke, a sort of speculation, like many others, merely to raise the money market and to assist the spirit of gambling.”

“ But I assure you, papa, it is spoken of as

a fact. A railway company is actually formed, and Mr. Eden says there are names above suspicion attached to the company, so you see it is not exactly a joke. But read it here in the *Times*, yourself, and then you will the better be enabled to judge."

And Mr. Passmore did read, with as much astonishment as did many others who read similar advertisements; who now, if they do not travel at fifty miles an hour, call it a slow coach; but the times have, indeed, advanced, scientifically and socially; and well might Mr. Passmore exclaim in the very words of Jacob, the times are advancing.

And thus the evening varied by music and conversation, passed, apparently, happily away; but there was one among that number, who, probably, for the first time in his life felt, he knew not why sad and disturbed in mind—the cause he scarcely could answer to himself—it could not be that thus early he loved the fair girl who had been the subject of his conversation with

his father—neither did he then love her in the reality of love—though there was not one but his sister whom he held in affection so near to his heart. Yet his feelings were not exactly those of a brother towards a sister. And he argued with himself the justice of his father's reasoning, as he lay in awaking thought, till, at length, slumber, threw her mantle of forgetfulness over all, and the last words he remembered, before closing his eyes, were does the heir of Lindford Hall purpose selecting for his bride, the daughter of Michael Coddington, the day labourer.

CHAPTER IV.

From the corners uttermost
Of the bounds of English coast,
From every hut, village, and town,
Where those who live and suffer, moan
For others' misery, or their own.

MR. JACOB and his companion, having quitted the farm of Ashton, walked onwards, taking the road to London, and after visiting several places by the way-side, in order that the former might enquire into the state of his, so termed, fellow

labourers, in adversity, endeavouring to breed a spirit of discontent into the minds of those who had little to complain of—and adding to the discontent of those who fancied they had reasonable ground of complaint they, at length, reached that city which commands the proudest station in Europe.

Excited by the reasoning and opinions of his tempter, George Radstock felt at first little regret at having left his peaceful home, for a life, as he believed, of future prosperity. All that Mr. Jacob related as apparent fact, or invented to entice the weak lad into his clutches for purposes of his own, served to interest and subdue thoughts of home and kindred, which might perhaps have induced him to reconsider the strange conduct he was pursuing ; but time was scarcely allowed him for thought. London, that mighty city, which ever grand and populous, as he had been led to believe it, from the little he had read, and the less he had heard, was far beyond all that his hitherto

simple ideas had imagined ; and as they walked along the crowded streets, and looked into the splendid shops, Radstock was lost in astonishment.

At the period of their arrival in the vast Babylon, there were no railways, no stations, even omnibuses, those convenient detestations were only in their birth—scarcely christened, full grown children as they now are.

And the mode of travelling adopted by Jacob, doubtless for the double purpose of economy, as that he might be enabled to sow the seeds of dissension by the way-side, was such as artists of a better order and pedestrian tourists find pleasure in ; with a pack on his back, not exactly such as pedlars use, and a thick crab stick, Jacob entered by Hyde Park Corner, side by side with the wondering George. Slowly they proceeded up Piccadilly, turned down the Haymarket, and crossed the spot where now the Nelson monument erects its ungainly column.

Here Mr. Jacob stopped for a moment, and looking at his bewildered partner ; thus addressed him, pointing at the same time towards Whitehall :—

“ There, on that spot, a tyrant king gave his worthless life into the hands of the executioner. Thus should fall the heads of all rulers, whose hearts and minds are not devoted to the welfare of their people—beyond leads to the Commons House of Parliament, where men sit not to discuss reason, not to pass laws to make men equal on earth—as are they before God—but to add to the people’s miseries by taxation and burdens, that will soon become too heavy to bear ; but I shall introduce you ere long to those, one of whom I am satisfied you will soon become, who, in my opinion, stand high, and who will never cease in their endeavours till they see things in a more fitting train. Men, I tell you, boy, with English hearts beating in their breasts, who will not

submit to be oppressed by laws and burdens made by the scions of the aristocracy ; and more, who revelling in riches, ought to spare a trifle in the position they hold ; yet who, having talked nonsense by the hour, go home to revel in luxury, or glory in their fancied patriotism, by strengthening the chains of slavery they profess to break asunder ; but happily the spirit of liberalism is gaining ground—we are daily becoming stronger in mental as well as in physical force ; daily are we joined by those who have voices that will soon be heard in the senate ; and minds to direct the sentiments they will make heard throughout Europe. The people, I say, must be truly free—we shall have our charter—and ere you are many years older. All slavery will end here, where it now stalks abroad as truly as among the sugar canes. Look at this vast city, peopled by millions. Look at the wide and well thronged streets. Look at the gorgeous palaces, but above all, look at the

splendid shops filled with every foreign gewgaw, and with every possible invention that the mind of man can form. And all for what! Are those splendours for you or me—are those gewgaws for the poor—the poor mechanic—he passes days and nights in slavery to make them—not for such as you or I—are the luxuries, the riches, the comforts you witness in every window we pass for the people? No, I tell you, no, George Radstock, they are for the select, the chosen few, our lords and masters, for aristocrats of blood, once from the same stock as we are—or aristocrats of money—lucky speculators—dishonest speculators in the game of life—the former, in all their pride and arrogance—far better to submit to them than the latter. I tell you, if we are to submit to a monarchy, though, I confess, I prefer a republic—we must bring the self-elected despots to their bearing. But more of this hereafter; let us now towards the Strand, for I am tired, and want refreshment; and you

appear to be looking at the women, as if you expected to see Miss Winter in every bonnet we meet, rather than listening to what I have had to say."

It was clear that our friend Jacob was a chartist of the first water ; at all events, if he were paid for distributing revolutionary sentiments, and those of the most unreasonable order, the labourer was worthy of his hire. True to his order of chartism, selfishness—and self-breathed in every syllable—and while he infused such loathsome councils into the ears of his young and ill-educated companion he full well knew, they were founded neither on reason or fact. And such he entirely believed. He knew that the very arguments he made use of, to convince others, were the very opposite to the truth ; and that those gewgaws, of which he complained, as being provided for the rich, were the very means which gave bread to honest men, and often procured them wealth.

But the two men, or rather the serpent and his victim, walked onwards up the Strand—George still in admiration of all he saw—but both silent. As, however, they passed that which is now the turning to Hungerford Market, two girls, arm-in-arm, passed them; when one immediately exclaimed—

“What, George, George Radstock, what in the name of wonder brought you to London? Have you enlisted, as you often threatened to do—or have you come to this great city, as many Englishmen do, to make their fortunes, and go back poorer than they came? Aunt tells us, Scotchmen only succeed in London. She did not tell us, however, that Englishmen ever thrived in Scotland; now that is quite another question; let an Englishman go there with money, he will surely leave it behind him—if he go there with none, he will not be long allowed to remain there. But there are plenty of sights, plenty of books, in this great city, so tell us what brought you here.”

“Yes, tell us what brought you here, George,” said the younger sister, with somewhat of kindness in her manner, for she perceived, and not without reason, that she had something to do with it.

Before George had time to reply, however, the wary and cunning Jacob read her thoughts, and acting thereon, for some purpose of his own, replied—

“Simply that your absence made such a place as Lindford insufferable for a lad of spirit like my friend George. All the charms of your luxuriant vales and woodlands, sparkling trout streams, and gaudy-bedecked hedgerows, were nothing in comparison to your sparkling eyes; so happening to be passing that way, in reference to a little business, having connection with the rural districts, we happened to meet, I spoke to the lad of London; he had a wish to know more of men and manners; moreover, his heart doubtless was

here—I am not surprised—I took a fancy to your friend George, and he to me—so here we are at your service. At present, I must carry him off—but to-morrow, or the next day, if so it please you, we shall be most happy to visit you, when you can talk over matters better than in the street.”

Here Mr. Jacob ran against a beggar, and not at first seeing who it was, begged his pardon—on a nearer inspection, however, he gave him a hearty curse—and wondered why such dirty vagabonds were allowed to go abroad—consistent in this as in everything else was the order of his race.

The Miss Winters having shaken hands with George, whom they already fancied changed for the better, solely that he was walking in the streets of London, instead of in the lanes of Lindford, went their way, wondering, as well they might, what on earth had brought George Radstock to London, and who was his companion.

As, however, they had given their address, they only required patience to learn.

In the meantime, George and Jacob proceeded, passed Somerset House, which Jacob pointed out as a bank for the plunder of the people ; and shortly afterwards, turning to the right, down Norfolk-street, entered the last house on the left-hand side—now, if I err not, a printing office—then apparently a boarding-house, or, at least, a place of entertainment for travellers in the middling class of life—at all events, it was most conveniently situated for those who arrived, or those who wished to depart, whether by land or water—for while the front entrance faced the street, there was also a mode of access and retreat of a most private nature, leading from the lower basement of the habitation to the river, within a few steps of the water's edge.

At the door of this house, Mr. Jacob rang, which summons was almost immediately an-

swered by a maid-of-all work, who, on recognising the visitor, threw aside the portal, and gave him welcome; passing this trusty and not over clean individual with a nod of recognition, and "how goes it, Lisa," Mr. Jacob, with his usual ease of manner, and self-sufficiency, walked onwards, and entered a small bar or parlour, in which a comfortable fire blazed, and by the side of which in close contact, sat a buxom lady, the mistress of the house, and a man rather passed the prime of life, of remarkably stern yet hypocritical countenance, dressed in a suit of black, with long, leather boots reaching to the knee. This individual might have been taken, by a casual observer, for an Independent preacher, or a travelling bishop, for ought I know to the contrary; as it was, he was simply an active leader of a -chartist division, who could speak by the hour seditious sentiments to the mob, which he neither understood or believed in himself;

and drink hot gin-and-water by the gallon, if he could get it for nothing, for the sake of free trade, which he had not the sense properly to appreciate, and in proof of his belief in the rights of an equalisation of property.

Whatever their subject of conversation, when George and Jacob entered, it was best known to themselves, it might have been politics, it might have been the weather, or possibly, the conscientious leader was paying his addresses to the buxom widow, with the intention of securing to himself an equal division in the profits of the known success of the good lady before him; be it as it may, there they sat in close conversation, seated in two comfortable arm-chairs; and while the lady listened, the speaker ever and anon washed his throat with a sip from the capacious tumbler of hot grog, which stood beside him on the table.

The moment the door opened, however, and the strangers entered, they were silent.

On the appearance of Jacob, they both rose and greeted him. The good woman, as we suppose all women to be, gave him welcome, and appeared glad to see him once more in the great city, while the man becoming half confused and half amazed at the interruption, acknowledged his salutation as one who knew himself to be his superior for the time being, in the race they were both running; yet, who also knew that position was only possessed from present circumstances, and not from absolute fact; therefore while he greeted Mr. Jacob in a friendly manner, with the foresight and knowledge of an acute mind, which told him, that among those with whom he was running a race over a course full of pits, though he was the present winner, the next day he might be the loser, it was, therefore, well that he should rule with a mild sway and not with a rod of iron; so he thus addressed him,—“ You are welcome back to the Government House, Mr. Jacob, most wel-

come to the great city ; you appear fatigued, as does your companion, I shall order you some refreshment. The good chiefs of the association for the benefit of mankind spare not good cheer to their leaders in the cause of universal freedom. Here Lisa, order a tender rump stake and onions for Mr. Delegate Clarke, let there be enough for two, and speedily. Who may your young friend be ? fresh from the butter meads and daisy banks, doubtless young and inexperienced in the mighty machinery which is working throughout the country, for the good people of a kingdom who fancy themselves free—poor slaves—we must endeavour to make them so.”

Here Mrs. Jones, to whom it certainly appeared that her visitor was free enough in all conscience with the brandy bottle and the larder, looked unutterable things towards Mr. Frost, who, cold as his name, in all things wherein self was not prominent, smiled, a ghastly smile of approval of his

own sentiments, turning to Jacob, also, but in arrogant terms again welcomed him back to London.

“You have returned just in the very moment we required you,” added Mr. Frost, “doubtless during your rural tour you have had little time to dip into the pages of the * * * which I nevertheless believe is regularly supplied to our delegates. You may, however, in the several, hosteleries where doubtless you have abided, when a more befitting rural inn has not presented itself, for the gaining of that knowledge for which you have wandered, or should chance not have permitted you to share the hospitality of some humble labourer in the cause of freedom, at his not your own expense, have gained a sight of the * * that luxurious appendage, printed solely for the indulgence of the aristocracy, and which, by-the-by, must at once be suppressed, and the proprietors put under lock and key of the goaler, the moment we

hold the reins of power. You have, I say, doubtless, recently met with that arch enemy to all the freedom which is based on the people's charter, and if so you will have learnt that the question of reform sticks fast in the hearts as in the heads of the government of this mighty kingdom. Reform, I say, even in manner, is out of the question with such men, and they must either yield to the voice of the people or they will be crushed. However, you have arrived in time, we have a meeting at the association to-morrow evening when I shall take the chair ; some other delegates have arrived from Bristol, and that neighbourhood, as also from the manufacturing districts in the north. I shall be prepared to receive your reports, at this you will all attend as members, and delegates, I am aware you are, none of you, good hands, at placing your thoughts on paper. The people scarcely require education, however. But we shall meet to hear their opinions, at eight to-night. We have received large subscrip-

tions in the common cause of liberty, indeed I have just been preaching to this dear woman the necessity of having a good supper prepared for the association, after our night's labour. You are well aware we really do labour for the people we are not men who receive large salaries, for doing nothing; we are not commissioners who read the morning papers, for twelve hundred per annum, then ride in the park and go home to feast on the bread of the people. We are not clergymen with three livings, who preach sermons written by their curates—or bishops who, by-the-bye, must be excluded from the House of Lords, and paid, if necessary that there should be bishops at all, three hundred a-year to give away in charity, they must be taught frugality like other people. A bishop is only meant to be an alms giver. However, all these matters will be fully discussed to-night, in the mean time you will refresh yourself; the labourer is worthy of his hire, I should recommend a bottle of port with your

steak—I will take another tumbler and look on while you discuss it. Mrs. Jones has orders from the association to provide the leaders, as well as the delegates and their followers with everything necessary from the general fund. Of course, we must be paid—and, Mrs. Jones—let Mr. Jacob have five or ten pounds if he requires it. He and his young friend may like to look in at the theatres or elsewhere, during their visit to this abode of wealth and indolence. Your refreshment will soon be here, in the meantime introduce me to this young gentleman, fresh from the country. Aye—one of the agricultural interest, wishes to join the association or has joined it, I conclude—sworn in at some local club, or desires at once to become a member of the metropolitan board of freedom, if so introduce him to-night we will enrol him, he can take the oath, and sup with us—as you have now had the honour of meeting one of the heads of the liberty party under this hospitable roof.

“He will be honoured indeed,” said Jacob, with a manner at least of humility and speech to his leader, about as inconsistent with the avowed sentiments and opinions of equality be it observed, as is possible, but such is precisely their case—there are no men under the sun so little minded, so vulgar in sentiment, so arrogant and despotic, as superiors so humble so cringing as inferiors, as are the equality and universal suffrage gentlemen, solely that they have, at best, one point of common sense known to them all, which is a thorough knowledge of the weakness and unreasonable opinions which they advocate, opinions which could only tend to the very despotism and misery of a people of whom they pretend to advocate the freedom; a sole desire to gain what they can in the scramble, after they have raised the tumult; and I repeat among the whole body of men calling themselves chartists—those among them who really are men of talent and respectability of position,

but who permit their names to be enrolled, it would be utterly impossible to say why; though by no means difficult to assert, with much truth, that they despise in their hearts the very men with whom they pretend to go hand in hand, as even do the heads of the chartist party despise one another. Well did Mr. Jacob know all this and more; but he was ever playing a game of self, and he played it well.

“My young companion, by name, George Radstock, Mr. Frost, one of our principal and most talented leaders—George Radstock, rural labourer, in fact, labourer in the good cause of liberty and equality all over the world, but particularly in England, as he desires—George Radstock, now rural labourer, —Mr. Frost, chartist leader. Having introduced the young lad I may observe that he was a good companion by the way, on which I advocated the cause and scattered the seeds of freedom of opinion, as I also intended to instil into his youthful mind—a mind I must admit

above the common order—those glorious ideas of civil and religious liberty, which we often hear eulogised in the Common's House of Parliament, but the sound of which, emanating in the halls of St. Stephen, seldom reach into the heart of this city, certainly not into the hearts of the inhabitants of the rural districts, in the sense we so conscientiously desire to apply them.

“This young fellow, however, had some idea of what is really meant by freedom ere we met—the very sparkling of his eye as we sat side by side in a snug room in a comfortable little bar at a village called Lindford, where a jolly old contented home-brewing host, who calls himself a whig, resided ; told me that he was one of us, and as we journeyed hither I have done my best to convince him of the fact, that the workingclass must have their bellies filled as well as the landed proprietors ; if not, why there must be a division of fields in the country as well as houses in the towns, and every man must have a slice and ; Mr. George is quite

of my, I may add our opinion Mr. Frost ; but there is another reason which induced me to listen to him, Mr. George desires to become a member of the association.

“The little village which had the honour of owning him as a son of the land, belongs, as do several thousands of acres around it, to a rich and despotic landlord, a regular grinder of the people—at least George informs me such is the case, and he must be looked to, we must make him bleed, sir, yes, he must pay out of his abundance into the common purse ; moreover, there is a gentleman farmer, an impudent fellow who calls himself squire Winter—excuse me Mr. Frost—what’s in a name—however, he is as cold blooded an upstart as can be, and actually laughed at my rebellious opinions, as he was pleased to term them, he also must be looked to ; however, I shall place these gentlemen’s names before the meeting, and in the black book to-night with others.

“I should observe, however,” continued

Jacob, looking at George Radstock, "this said gentleman farmer has two charming sisters fine, handsome, high spirited girls—they are now in London; my friend here is a great man with the ladies, and they appear to have the good sense to admire a young man who has the courage to stand up with force—if needs be with physical force—in the cause of liberty. These girls are fitted to be the wives of any gentlemen in the land, and George, having gained a place in the hearts of the people, intends to retain that he has already won in the heart of Miss Winter. Ha, ha, here come the steaks; upon my word, Mrs. Jones, your kitchen department appears to be as admirably arranged as usual, the very flavour which arises from beneath this cover is sufficient to cause me the appetite of an alderman; gentleman who must also be looked too, and not without justice, for by the cap of liberty I swear they are generally more in want of appetite than the where-withal to appease it; not that I complain with

such a steak as this before me," continued Jacob, making an incision into the juicy meat, which he then pushed over to George, begging he would help himself, the care of self being the first thought in the head of the chartist. "No indeed," continued this worthy patron, "the members of the association are liberal in act as in profession—so with your permission, Mrs. Jones, we will even take a glass of your old crusted port—well they may be so with their means, wrung from the hard earnings of a deluded people—Yes," said Jacob, with a mouth well filled with fried onions, "these aldermen must be roused in their luxurious dens, the corporations require reforming, and their dinners re-modelling—turtle and venison must be excluded from their feasts; indeed I consider the deer in every man's park is the property of the people—why not order a haunch for supper to-morrow—aye, Frost, I beg your pardon—Mr. Frost," seeing the promoter of freedom was looking rather indignant at such terms of

equality being addressed to him—"venison I was about to say, sir, is very digestive, very indeed, and sits light on the stomach, particularly after much talking; and I fancy a haunch would be no bad thing after the meeting, washed down by a bowl or two of punch—a sort of treat to the hard worked leaders of our party, a double treat to the humble delegates, among whom I feel myself an honoured member. 'Pon my word Mrs. Jones this stake is superlatively good—a few more onions, lad. Talking of turtle—for this tender meat is as delicious as a stewed fin—calls to my mind a story of Bristol aldermen, before that worthy and illustrious body were made to disgorge a part of their abundance. The good man was fond of turtle soup—very fond of turtle soup—so fond that having finished two large plates full, he felt much desire to attack a third—nature, however, cried hold, enough—so turning to a servant who waited behind his chair, he said, 'John, have you a good appetite.'

‘Yes, sir,’ said the slave, who doubtless had had a pound and a half of bacon to damp his ardour, and looked forward to the remnants of the feast. ‘Yes, sir—a very good one.’

“Well, John, then I will give you a guinea for it. Ah, how I wish my throat was a mile long, and every inch a palate—carefully, Mrs. Jones, carefully, if you please; pray do not shake the bottle—permit me—’pon my word, the crust lies as thick on the side as sand—pop—all right, now, Mr. Frost, permit me to pour you out one glass, it will correct the brandy-and-water, and enable you to drink prosperity and plenty to the people of England.”

Such prosperity and plenty doubtless as these patriots were enjoying at their expense; but I must leave them, for a while, to their evil ways, and go elsewhere.

George Radstock, it is yet time to return to the peaceful though humble home you have left. It is yet time, I say, to return home—the very name is one that throbs in the heart

of an Englishman ; labour, lad, in the honest calling in which your father gained the name of an upright and much respected English Yeoman. It is yet time—be not led away with false, selfish and rebellious reasoning, and let not the bright eyes of those who would ruin and then despise you, make for you a hell, when Heaven is before you. Recollect contentment, if it does not bring riches, does the same thing by banishing the desire for them. If it cannot remove the disquietude arising from a man's mind, body, or fortune, it makes him bear his burdens more easily.

CHAPTER IV.

I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad,
Than living dully sluggardized at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.

It may be readily supposed that on meeting with George Radstock so unexpectedly in the streets of London, the Miss Winters were not a little astonished; and as they hurried on from the Strand towards a more fashionable quarter of the metropolis, where they loved to

see and be seen—probably still more that they might have the honour of saying, that they had mixed with their betters, though truly it was only in the street—their curiosity became more and more intense to learn something of the why and the wherefore he was there, and the who was his companion. As regards themselves, they had kindly been invited by a widowed sister of their father's—the wife of a retired grocer, who had died some years since, and left her an easy competence and a small but respectable house in the New Road—to pass a month in seeing the London sights ; she, good woman, however, little expected, when she invited her country nieces, to be attended on by two such fine ladies ; but seeing, at once, that they thoroughly despised her plain ways, and that she was not only totally unable to renounce them, but also that they called her dear aunty, and accepted all her minor offices, as if they were doing her honour, instead of expressing gratitude ; she allowed them to go their way—a

way which generally led them to walk about several hours each day either sight-seeing or shopping—their walks rarely terminating without an adventure, owing to their total ignorance of a town life, and London habits.

“Well,” said the elder sister, “so George has found his way to London ; he is evidently desirous to profit by your lessons ; but who was his companion ?—a strange man I take it ; did you look at his countenance—is he a Jew ?”

“I know not more than you do.” “But what on earth could have brought George here—is the lad mad, or what can be his object ?”

“His object—why to see you, to be sure, what else can have brought him on so foolhardy an errand ? however, I expected as much, you have turned the boy’s head, he is in love with you, I say, and has come here solely for your society.”

“Then the sooner he goes back the better, for I am not in love with him. I in love with

a day-labourer's son—no such fool I assure you ; however, for the sake of old acquaintance—for the sake of Lindford, where I was born, stupid though the place be, I shall urge him to return."

"A labourer's son," replied Miss Winter, "and what of that ? it is you, I say, who have brought him here, and from all we learn, there are those in Lindford who do not despise a labourer's daughter, though he be a squire somewhat richer than our brother ; but we are late, Gelica, and aunt will be grumbling at our unsteady ways, as she calls them ; moreover, we shall have a visit, depend upon it, from George to-morrow, probably from his companion also—and we must prepare aunt to receive them, otherwise she will imagine we have picked up some acquaintance in the streets."

"Let her imagine what she likes," said Gelica, "I am quite indifferent to what she imagines. We have done no harm—and even if we had, it is no business of hers ; I did not

come to London to have all my actions watchèd, and all my words weighed : if so, the sooner we return to Lindford the better—dull as it is there, we can do as we like.”

“ Well, Gelica, you need not put yourself in a pet ; all I said was, it will be better to tell aunt that we expect this Mr. Jacob What’s-his-name and a young friend from Lindford, that she may receive them properly—for you know she has a strange manner of her own, and she can be as disagreeable as she is usually kind.”

“ Well, do as you like—do as you like, sister, for my part, I would prefer saying nothing—her astonishment will be rather amusing, and I should dearly like to watch her fidgetting curiosity—but here we are, and ten minutes too late for dinner, if my watch is right.”

The contrast between the neat and quaker-like costume of the good Mrs. Simons and that of her handy, little, neat and clean parlour-maid, as regarded her nieces, was somewhat

striking—the former dressed in a lead-coloured silk gown, and well-starched cap, sat in a high-backed chair near the fire-place, expecting her nieces and dinner ; while the little hand-maiden, only awaited their presence to place it on the table.

They hurriedly entered the room, all be-flounced and be-ribboned, both exclaiming, in one breath.

“Lor aunt how exact you are ; to a moment, I declare. Why, at Lindford, dinner is rarely served till half an hour after the time, and really the day was so fine, that we lingered longer than we intended.”

“Well, never mind, girls, never mind ; but recollect, you are in my house, and not in your own. What you do at Lindford is to please yourselves ; while you are here, it would be kind to conform to my regularity. Indeed, without system, it is impossible to get on through life—so take off your things, and let

us to go to dinner. Recollect, I give you little time for outward adornment."

I shall not trouble my readers with any account of Mrs. Simons's hospitality, suffice that no sooner had they dined, than one sister betook herself to her books, while the other looked out of window ; in such mode, the evening passed ; tea succeeded to dinner, and bed to tea. And there we leave the young ladies, to happy and romantic dreams, or sound and undisturbed refreshing sleep, which ever suits them best, while we return to the abode of Mrs. Jones, the queen of Liberty Hall.

Mr. Jacob and his young friend, assisted by the leader, Mr. Frost, made brief work of a bottle of port, and then having solaced themselves with another, which, considering the grog he had already swallowed, was about as much as the latter could conveniently carry away ; he bid them enjoy themselves, awaiting the meeting of the following evening, and

went his way, more elated than ever as he imagined in the cause of freedom, but actually so only in the cause of dram drinking.

Mr. Jacob took a nap in one of the easy-chairs, while George, for the first time, asked himself—

“Why am I here, and with whom? and for what have I left my native vale of peace and calm contentment, to mix with those who appear to exist only on excitement, and for the benefit of self?”

And then, for the moment, came a sad thought of the home, and friends, and relations, whom he had left in utter ignorance of his intentions, or of whither he had bent his steps. Then passion—then ambition—if I may so call it—followed in the wake of these better sentiments.

He knew that Gelica Winter was in town, and his own yet unsettled mind told him there was nothing to be gained by remaining in a rural village; there ought to be much in

joining the association, which he had that day heard named, and of which, on the morrow, he was to become a member; at the time, he scarcely knew what a chartist really meant, notwithstanding all the endeavours of our friend Jacob, to instil into his mind the many virtues of these amiable and illustrious patriots. Indeed, had all he urged in the favour of these chartists been true as the sun, instead of as false as himself, they had only to carry out their views to the fullest extent, to make England a lump of washed California gold, from which every man could knock off a lump, whenever he wanted money. The imagining of what the world may be by a young mind, till you find yourself running in the every-day race with the multitude, and the reality of what it is when you find yourself jostled side by side with a worldly neighbour, are as widely different as the fresh culled early rose of summer, to the stale cabbage stalk cast on the dunghill. Moreover, nothing is more rapid

than the learning of worldly lessons; the greatest dolt soon exhibits tastes, feelings, and knowledge, surprising even to himself, and if the mind of him, who, for the first time, comes in contact with these realities, is above the common order, the strength of imagination and the desires it creates are as rapid as the eagle's flight.

"This is all strange enough," said George to himself; "but as far as it goes, by no means, unpleasant. I fancy Jacob must be right; we are not born to be slaves—at all events, this mode of life is somewhat better than tilling the ground; and I, for one, see no reason why one man is to feed while another starves; moreover, I shall gain some knowledge of the world; and when I have become a member of the association, I shall see if I cannot become a delegate or a leader. I conclude they are paid from these funds they speak of—I wonder where and from whom they obtain them. Tomorrow I shall see Gelica Winter, and ask her

what is her opinion. Mr. Frost is a strange man; but he has evidently power of some sort—and that is what I seek.”

Having reasoned so far, he was about to rise, and walk to the window, which looked into a sort of court, when Mr. Jacob awoke, and rubbing his eyes, started up.

“’Pon honour,” said he, “I feel quite refreshed with my nap—have you been sleeping, lad?—I’ll tell you what—there is no reason to idle away all the night—suppose we take a look at one of the theatres—a walk to old Drury—aye, what do you say—never seen a play-house I imagine, at least, not such a house as that. No theatre at Lindford—aye, George, only old Smythe’s back parlour, fair Nancy, and the baker—exciting amusement for country clods, but not a pastime for gentlemen like ourselves. By the cause I serve, and the banner of freedom under which I fight, that port was excellent—we’ll have a few oysters

and a little mulled wine when we return—nothing like making hay when the sun shines. Besides, the association pays, you know—here, Mrs. Jones—good, Mrs. Jones—I am about to introduce George Radstock, Esq., gentleman, a humble advocate of general liberty throughout the world, but more particularly throughout England, fresh from the jungle to society—we go, dear madam, to old Drury—shall we have the honour of escorting you?”

“No.”

“Well, I thought so—you do not seem inclined—to you these little matters of festivity are every-day affairs, to me occasional breaks on the monotony of life—to my young friend here, doubtless, a source of surprise and admiration; but he will give you his own opinion on our return. I was merely desirous of naming to you, that a few oysters scoloped, or in their living luxuriousness will be most acceptable about midnight. A shell fish and

Jacob C. have long been strangers—and the addition of your amiable presence will add charms to the treat.”

“Your wishes shall be attended to; but, look ye, Mr. Jacob—do not be after midnight, for it is necessary, if not within this house, at least without, to have the appearance of regularity.”

“Fear not, Mrs. Jones,” said the delegate.

And the companions sallied forth towards the theatre, at the doors of which, owing to the representation of some novelty or popular piece, hundreds were assembled.

Be good enough to bear in mind, that not many years since, the rage for dramatic performance had by no means decreased, and at such period, they were far more striking spectacles to one who had never previously entered the arena of any theatre, still more so, the largest in England, on a night when it was filled

from pit to gallery. It was, therefore, not surprising that George Radstock should have been struck dumb with delight, admiration and astonishment, as he followed Jacob into the pit, who, with his usual effrontery, pushed and hustled the crowd, in order to attain a position near the foot-lights. At length, not without difficulty, he gained his desired position, and squeezing himself into a place, desired George to squeeze himself beside him. What cared he for courtesy or politeness—like all other places and all other people, the chartist delegate felt he had a right to the best as well as another, and it little mattered whether he crushed the fat neighbour on his right to death, or sat on the lap of the fair girl on his left—a place he would have, and a good one, and, as is usual with such men, he got it. Having, at length, hedged himself in by Jacob, George sat silent and amazed, not less so did Jacob, who for half an hour appeared interested with the drama.

At length, however, the scene being concluded, he turned to his neighbour, and questioned him as to his opinion of things in general, and theatres in particular.

“Somewhat different this, I fancy, young man, to that which you have ever conceived of life; talk of rural joys—talk of luxuriant woods and silvery streams, and flowery meads—look round, young man, there are charms on every side, and equal to Miss Winter’s, of high and low degree, in full costume and humble attire, on every side. I say, is not this a scene of enchantment? do you question now the wisdom of leaving your sweet Lindford, for such glories as these. But even here, I must warn you, that there is a wide field for reformation. The great lords and ladies you see, are provided with soft and cushioned seats, and sit enthroned above us. True, our friends in the gallery, are somewhat more loftily placed, but their very loftiness demeans them, for they pay for that they can scarcely

see, or to listen for what they cannot hear. Look at those fine gentlemen in embroidered waistcoat—those are England's hard bargains, the oppressors of the poor—probably, some of our law makers. By George, such fellows would walk over our heads if it pleased their fancy—but wait till to-morrow night, and you shall hear our plans for keeping them in their proper places. But tell me, lad, what you think of this gorgeous scene—art thou satisfied ?”

“It is beautiful indeed,” replied George. “I could scarcely have imagined there was such a place, or that so much wealth could have been expended in amusement ; but surely there can scarcely exist all the poverty and misery you have described to me in the metropolis, if so, how can so many find means to expend in their pleasures. And as for those who sit above us, I conclude they pay more for their places than we do, and are therefore entitled to them. Why did we not go there ?”

“Ignorance, lad, ignorance ; you have much to learn ; those you see here, are not what are generally termed the slavish poor, though, forsooth, there are many who like to have a little enjoyment in the society of those who are vulgarly called their betters, when to accomplish it, they perhaps expend their last sixpence, and know not where to obtain another, save it be out of their neighbour’s pocket ; and as for our taking our places side by side with those in the boxes, we must have better coats on our backs, mark ye, or we should be soon thrust forth, as mad dogs. Wealth, I tell you, wealth rules the land—not the rights of man ; look at that fat gentleman in the white neckcloth—his father was a pork butcher ; when the war broke out, he speculated in salt pork, and obtained a contract from the admiralty board to supply the fleet at the Nore, and enriched himself from the pockets of the people. One night, coming home fatigued, after having signed a contract,

by which he pocketed some thousand pounds in curreney of the realm, and got rid of some thousand pounds of unwholesome pickle pork, he stuffed himself to repletion on his own sausages, and died, I was about to say, from spontaneous combustion, during the night. His son, that florid gentleman yonder, continued his papa's avocation for a time; but finding that his thousands became tens of thousands, and his tens of thousands hundreds, moreover, that there were pleasanter recreations than pork contracts, he renounced the pig-line, and settled down as a gentleman of property. Wealth, I tell you, lad, will buy a bishoprick. Government required money and support, and he bought a baronetcy. His title ought to have been Sir John Griskin, it is Sir Jeremiah Hare. And, mark ye, though he rose from the scum of the earth, and became enriched by pigs and the people, search England throughout, and you will find there is not

a more bigotted, purse-proud arrogant, overbearing despot than is he. True, I am a chartist delegate, but this I must affirm—it is not the truly noble and chivalous aristocrats who trample on our order, like one such fellow as you see yonder. The aristocracy of blood is sometimes bad enough, but Heaven help us from the aristocracy of wealth. These are the fellows we must first bring to their senses ; and I have marked that fat chap yawning there—few more pigs he shall ever bring to market—pay more for their places than we do—of course they must—and have they not the means to do so ?”

Jacob was not far wrong in his opinions as regards the aristocracy of wealth. One great man would never admit that from the hard earnings of the people, whose cause he assumed to advocate, and whose country he has made almost a desert and a charnel-house, he wrung the pence which came into his exchequer as

pounds, on which he lived in luxury, while they were starving.

Jacob equally forgot, that the beef-steak he had eaten—the port wine he had swallowed—his seat at the theatre—and the supper he had ordered, would be paid for from the funds of an association, drawn from the pockets of a deluded and impoverished people, cajoled into the idea that the mite which they cast into the cause of reform would return to them in abundance.

But the orchestra has ceased its enlivening strains, and once more the curtain rises, and opens to view, the gorgeous pageant; the task, however, would be as idle as uninteresting, were I to describe that which all perhaps who will read this have witnessed, sufficient, that the representation of the night being over, the delegate and the candidate for chartist honors returned to the snug apartment of Mrs. Jones, who impatiently awaited to do the hos-

pitalities of her well-spread beard, and thus ended the first day of George Radstock's arrival in the Great Babylon, which, henceforth, was to be the theatre in reality, on which, for a time, he was to act the life of man.

CHAPTER V.

Let those
Insnare the wretched in the toils of law,
Fomenting discord and perplexing right.

FEVERISH the sleep, and excited beyond all belief was the mind of George, as he lay, for the first time, his aching head on the pillow of a Metropolitan bed. Now dosing—now restless, turning from side to side, like flashes of lightning thought after thought rushed on his astonished mind—wearied was the

body almost to the aching of his limbs, for he had walked far the day previous, and the early hours of morning had sounded on St. Paul's before the delegate, well accustomed and hardened to such revelry, had bid him good night.


Home—where was it ? he had no longer one—there never would he return—at least not the humble cot—beneath the honeysuckle porch of which he had once gamboled in innocent delight. Then the form of that honest upright hard-working father would come as a spirit in his dreams. But Satan—in the form of ambition hurried on by faction—and fostered by the reasonings of rebellious man pointed onwards. Forgotten were the innocent prayers he had been nightly taught to offer up to Him, who, in the direst woe, never turns from those who ask with a contrite heart and broken spirit, but prayers were not numbered in the people's charter.

Feverish and excited there he lay—thoughts

of astonishment at what he had beheld at the theatre—so far beyond all he had expected—all he had ever dreamt of—the mind however at length gave way, appealed to in the cause of nature, and he slept, but how short, how unnatural, how unrefreshing was that sleep. At length he started up—the image of Gelica Winter was before him, she appeared to beckon him on to urge him to take the oath of the peoples' charter—to become a leader—perhaps to enter parliament, to do he knew not what, or why, or wherefore—sufficient her form, her face was there clearly defined as were it day-light—her voice also apparently was distinct to his over exerted imagination—urging him to advance in the cause of liberty—urging him to free men from slavery, 'and then I will be yours.' Her form again disappeared, and he at last dropped off into that heavy sleep which may rest the the limbs but never does the mind. His last thoughts, however lingered homewards—would that the morning light had not dispersed them

all, and once more might bring him back to life's reality—thoughts of ambition and wild hopes for the future.

Breakfast was no sooner over than Jacob proposed a visit to the young girls to whom he had introduced himself the day previous ; he was a wily fox, was this said delegate, and to do him justice, he was honest in all he contemplated, or took in hand ; whether for the moment his reasoning led to good, or acts of the most consummate villany, it would be ridiculous to suppose that a man who would act as he did, possessed ought that could be termed genius or talent, had he ought of such virtues he would soon have freed himself from the position which his poverty and love of ease had caused him to select—but no tact, of the most acute—daring of the most keen, and a knowledge of character, obtained from the constant association with those whom he knew could not be trusted, induced him always to be on the guard, and he had already come to the



conclusion that George might be useful to the association ; in the first place he had discovered that the lad had ambition, if not talent, of no ordinary degree, which only required to be developed by a contact with the world and its ways ; moreover, he knew that the girl whom we have already named, had a strong hold, if not on his affections, at least on his senses, and that while she was nearly allied to a man who with a weak head and proud heart had, on a first interview, defied his evil advice and reasoning, he yet felt that some way or other, with the assistance of George, he might be gained over to their plans, and through him the Passmore estate might be made to contribute to their fund, and every penny added to that fund by the means of a delegate, was an addition to the favour in which the delegate was held by the leaders.

Breakfast therefore was no sooner over, and Mr. Jacob took good care that it should be of a most substantial order, to which he did ample

justice, then he proposed a visit to the New Road, to which George most readily assented, and the companions started on their expedition. By-the-way our delegate endeavoured to impress on George the necessity of bearing himself well at the forthcoming meeting.

“No fear,” said he, “but that finding you a useful and active advocate of the rights of an oppressed people, ere long you will find yourself actively employed, indeed I should not wonder, if you stand forth manfully, and keep your ground during the examination you will undergo, but that you may be employed as I am, a worthy delegate to the rural slaves—it is a high, honourable, and trust-worthy position. We want young men who have hitherto been unconnected with the vices of a town—men who really see things in their true light as you do—men who know that landlords feed on the fat of the land, while labourers starve. Go on my boy,” said Jacob, “as you have begun, and who knows but you may take a lead

some day in the affairs of the state, and then I should imagine you would not walk through Lindford with a proud step.—oh no, of course not, and this Miss Gelica, with her sparkling eyes, pale face, and pretty ankles—so proud as she is—and so brief in her replies—she would not kneel to you instead if you to her—oh no—I should trust not—go on I say lad—in the cause of liberty—right a-head, no turning to the right or left—straight forward, head up, erect and firm, a pillow of freedom, a leader in the cause of an oppressed and taxed nation. But here we are in the New Road, I declare, a pleasant situation and fine air—'pon honour—quite reminds me of the Lindford vales. The sparrows chirp as sparrows are wont to chirp. All is as gay as a May-day. But what is the number of good Mrs. Simons's residence? fourteen if I recollect a right—those charming girls named—well, this is twenty-three—so walk on; and on they walked till they arrived at the aforesaid number, when

Mr. Jacob rang loudly at the bell, which being answered, he asked in a firm voice if Mrs. Simons was within, which summons being replied to in the affirmative, the visitors were asked into the same apartment where sat the old lady in the same chair, and in the same dress as the previous evening, save that instead of awaiting her nieces for dinner, with spectacles on she now was reading the bible—unaccustomed to such visitors, she turned sharply in the chair—and with an air of stiff propriety, scarcely of courtesy begged to be informed as to the nature of their business. The ready impudence of Mr. Jacob, however, never forsook him, and he at once replied.

“Business mam—we have none—we come like knight-errants, in days when chivalry, instead of despotism, ruled in this unhappy land, to pay our humble respects to you, and our homage to your fair nieces.”

“Well, sir, I know nothing of despotism, and less of chivalry—and less of you than

either—to whom may I be addressing myself, for I am not aware that I have ever seen your faces before, either in my good husband's time or during my widowhood. Perhaps you are acquainted with my nieces, the Miss Winters; if so, they have not been pleased to name your intended visit, which, as they are visiting under my roof, if not actually necessary—as an act of courtesy, at all events would have been obliging.”

“Oh, probably not, ma'am probably not—for I am not aware that we named a day for our intended visit—therefore, so far, we are to blame, not they—permit me therefore to introduce myself to your respectful notice, as Mr. Jacob Clarke, a humble delegate in the people's cause, recently returned from the rural districts, and last from Lindford, where I had the pleasure of meeting with your nephew, madam, Squire Winter, of Ashton-farm, an open-hearted, high-minded, middle-county squire, and I assure you madam, the fresh bloom of the

rose paints on his manly cheeks, the fresh air of the country gives elasticity to his manly form, in fact, madam, he is a fine specimen of a country gentleman, of whom you have reason to be proud; and this young gentleman, permit me to introduce him, madam, as is my custom, Mr. George Radstock, from Lindford, madam, the friend of your nephew and the playmate of your charming nieces, from their youth upwards. George Radstock—Mrs. Simons, the amiable and respected widow of the late Mr. Simons, merchant of the city of London, and a friend of free trade.”

Here Jacob stopped to take breath, on which the old lady taking the spectacles from her nose, half rose from her chair, and said, in rather a hasty voice—

“I desire to be glad to see all who call on me, or who are the friends of those of my blood, but I tell you what, sir, if you are a friend of the people, as you say you are, the best thing you can teach them is the love of God,

and contentment in the position in which it has pleased Him in his wisdom to place them—my departed and beloved husband was no merchant, but an upright honourable hard-working retail dealer in grocery, a man respected in his class, who paid his taxes cheerfully, inasmuch as he knew them to be necessary to the well being of the nation—a man who honoured his sovereign, obeyed the law; and above all, faithfully served his master. Thus, sir, after thirty years hard and honest labour, he died, leaving me with an ample competence for life, and thus proving self was not a virtue in his dictionary. As for free-trade, if you mean to infer that the produce of the earth, whether at home or abroad—or the industry of all men, whether Foreigners or Englishmen—should be brought into a market for all men to purchase at the lowest price consistent with the payment of labour, so far I go with you, as would have gone my worthy husband; but not in the light you take it, I

fancy; without wishing intentional offence, I presume you mean by free-trade that this house is as much yours as mine. But you will find that the people of England, whose rights you profess to advocate, are only those who are totally un-English in all their acts and opinions. However, it is not for an old woman like me to argue on such points, my day is well nigh spent, and I pray I may die as I have lived in peace. But I repeat my husband was no merchant, but a respectable shop-keeper. And I acknowledge no nephew assuming the right to the title of Esquire. True, I have a relation whom I would desire to esteem as a frank country yeoman farmer, such was my brother, and his father before him; and although he might have possessed a trifle more of this world's wealth than that which generally falls to the lot of yeomen it gave him no title to be a gentleman, nor his son either; and if he advocates such principles, I hope he will not visit me. I observe his sisters are already

imbibing such notions. If you are their friends you are welcome; but it would be as well to tell them that I will leave the little I have to a charitable institution, rather than to any one, however mean in blood, who, instead of making themselves respected in the class to which they belong, aspire to one in which they have no right on earth to move."

Jacob, for once in his life felt somewhat staggered by the arguments of this humble minded old woman, but he rallied, and was about to come to the charge; when the Miss Winters entered, having evidently been apprised by the servant of all work, that strangers were in the parlour. Miss Winter, senior, with flowing locks and well arranged flounces, led the way, curtesying and blushing; but on seeing George, she put forth her hand, and welcomed an old acquaintance; while Jacob ever free and easy, also extended his, which warmly pressed that of his newly made friend who appeared nothing loath to receive his

advances. Gelica came next, from her face, however, nothing could be ascertained of that which was working either in her head or heart; she also shook George by the hand perhaps more warmly than her sister; but declined the proffered one of Jacob, and making him a bow, seated herself by the window.

“Well, George,” said Miss Winter, “you’re really grown a man since we left the country; do pray tell us something of Lindford, and what think you of London. Is the young squire Frederick, at home, and how goes on little Mary; doubtless, a fine lady—she has now been some months up at the Hall—fine times for her—who ever thought a labourer’s daughter would be thus taken by the hand by the old gentleman. Well, I say she is a lucky girl, if they do not soon send her back to her thatched cottage discontented and dissatisfied, and her brother—he was a fine lad, is he still working up at the park.”

George replied to all these queries. He did

not imagine young Mary would be sent home again; day by day she was more loved at the Hall, and day by day it was said she progressed in her learning. Mr. Fred. had been at home, and was returned to Oxford. And young Codrington still worked at the park with increased wages. In other respects the village and its inhabitants jogged on as heretofore, as well as ever.

While this conversation was taking place, Mrs. Simons retired from the room, leaving her nieces to entertain their visitors; when immediately Mr. Jacob seated himself by Miss Winter, while George approached the window-seat, and took a chair by the side of Mary. I may here remark that the illustrious delegate, on his arrival in London, had brushed the dust of travel from his outward man, adopted a well made upper coat extracted from his knapsack, and treated himself to a new hat, and from the funds of the association, which he never had the slightest delicacy in expending when

allowed to grasp, inasmuch as he felt them as entirely his own, as had he received them as the rental of his landed possessions; George, too, had also been treated to a new beaver, and sundry other little articles of apparel, which, as he was now a well grown and handsome lad, tall, and advanced for his age, gave him an appearance of far greater years than he possessed, and his countenance being marked with expression, any one would have pronounced him a well looking and educated lad of the middle classes of life. Indeed, had he been well instructed, and well dressed, from his apparently extreme quiet manner, he would have passed muster with those far above him in society.

“ Really, miss, “ said Jacob, “ it is most refreshing after the arduous duties I have of late been performing, for the good of this glorious, but ill governed and impoverished country, to find myself in the society of one so charming as yourself, from the country too, which is ever an additional recommendation to

us men of the city. Moreover, I feel as if had I known you all my life—for my fine young friend, there, apparently in the presence of her he most adores, and consequently at heaven's portal—has whiled away many a tedious hour on our journey hence, with tales of your many virtues. If I err not, you are the elder of the two—Miss Winter, I should say. Well, I should scarcely have imagined such to be the case, so slightly marked is the appearance between you. In fact, had not George apprised me to the contrary, I should have said, the same hour permitted you both to see the light of heaven. Your good aunt, too, a wealthy woman, I presume, but somewhat strange in her notions of political and religious freedom. With her, a Hottentot is a Hottentot, and nothing more—a papist a papist—a tory a tory—and a chartist, though we ought scarcely to be named among such a set—a chartist—she may be a right good woman. But, recollect, young lady, a mare is a horse, though a

horse is not a mare. This, probably, she would scarcely admit—nevertheless, such is the case all the world over. And though she declares her husband was not a merchant, but a dealer of grocery, if she were to visit Scotland as I once did, as a humble delegate from the association, she would learn that he that sells, whether it be a pennyworth of potatoes, or a pound of bacon, as he who possesses large ships and who trades to distant shores, is admitted by general consent to be a merchant. Therefore, on this point, your worthy aunt is in error—pardon me, she is in error. Again, it is an admitted fact, that attorneys are squires—apothecaries squires, and freeholders—whether they have one field or twenty, are undoubtedly squires. But, again, your dear aunt does not agree with my liberal notions in this matter. And she, therefore, boldly asserts that your worthy brother, whom I had the pleasure of visiting, and who, by-the-bye, received me most truly like an hospitable yeoman, as he is; neverthe-

less, no squire or gentleman, but a country farmer. Now, my dear young friend—permit me so to call you—for I have a deep interest in your welfare, this charming old lady, moreover, at once informed us during the brief period she honoured us with her company, previous to your gracing the room with your pleasing presence, that her little fortune, which, by-the-bye, appears sufficient for tolerable comfort, will only be left to those who think as she does. Pardon me, my dear young lady, that I, a humble delegate of chartism, should presume to offer you advice. I do so, inspired by your beauties of person, which I am assured are only surpassed by your beauties of mind. I say then, be to her a grocer's, or if she so will, a farmer's daughter—but be true to yourself, for her little investments are not to be despised."

While the ever watchful Jacob, both as regarded his own interests, as toward those

whom he desired to make subservient thereto, was giving this wholesome advice to one so fully prepaed to listen to his reasoning. George and his enslaver, had retired to the window-seat, and there sat side by side. A position the lad had long coveted, and to which, for what reason it would be difficult to explain—for love had little existence in her breast—the girl had no sort of objection. I have already stated that she was several years older than him, who had, from his youth upwards, been wont to listen with attention to every word which fell from her lips, and who, moreover, was ever ready to fly to serve her wishes. Cold in nature, yet firm and decided in action, and possessed of very considerable natural abilities, it would have been difficult to select a more fitting person to lead astray a weak and ambitious youth, in whatever class of society he might have been found; to what is actually termed beauty, she could lay little claim; yet she

had that which is perhaps more fascinating, a soft and speaking eye, with an admirably formed, graceful and light figure, and attractive manners; add to this her coldness of deportment was not that which is only outwardly visible to the world, and inwardly as a consuming fire, but it was inherent to her natural disposition. If the tear fell but seldom from her eyelid, equally seldom did it fall from her heart—she rarely acted without some end, that end being, generally speaking, self.

If she had a preference for any human being beyond another it was for him who now sat before her—but this probably arose more from custom and association than from any other cause.

It would, therefore, I repeat, have been difficult to discover, from her manner, from whence arose the wish which evidently did exist to urge George Radstock onwards in the

ruinous cause which he appeared to have so eagerly commenced—save that her acute cunning and tact induced her at once to discover, that he had vastly changed for the better both in personal appearance and apparent knowledge, since she had last beheld him ; and though she knew not to what, or for what end, she judged there was within him that which might cause him to rise in a worldly position, but what that position might be, she had as yet never decided. Pity that the power she possessed had not then been turned to good account, if so him, she was about to sacrifice to her unplanned selfishness, might, in an honest and upright course, have been excited to have gained a post of honour, if not independence. But her novel reading had been of the worst, her education of the most unproductive. Onwards in the world was all she looked for, she cared not how—not, probably, that she would have urged any man to sin for her sake, or to gain his

ends by ought in her imagination which appeared as sin ; and she certainly never allowed it to enter her head that George should become what the world calls a gentleman, that he might place her in a position to be what the world equally and erroneously calls a lady. She had been touched already by the sentiments which, however, had fallen from the lips of Jacob ; she heard him speak of equality of rights—the people's charter—universal suffrage—vote by ballot—and equalisation of property. She understood these sentiments as little, and judged them as lightly and selfishly as he who was attempting to teach them, but she saw through the mist by which they were surrounded, saw in her imagination, that a ray of sunshine glittered in the distance—romance did the rest—George must break through that mist, and stand out prominently in its brightness.

Mr. Jacob Clarke appeared to her to be a fitting helpmate—but her tact, were it nothing else,

enabled her clearly to decide—he had already gained the highest step on which his foot would ever stand—such were her feelings—such the grounds on which, turning towards George, and smiling, she asked him what what had brought him to London, and who was his companion.

Generally speaking, Radstock was almost as taciturn as herself; but very different were the feelings which beat in his young heart. They were warm, sincere, ardent, and enthusiastic, but ill-directed, with little education, though good abilities.

The last few years of his young life had been passed almost in idleness; and all he had learnt as yet was, that honest labour was unpleasant, and the society of those who might have taught him better, had only told him, that he, as a village lad, was in a bad position.

Having left that village with his wily instructor, he had lost no time in gaining a worldly lesson by the way, though alas, that lesson was a most penicious one. Nevertheless he had already drunk the bitter draught of chartism, and was ready, too ready to become a member of the association. With these views, he at once replied—

“ I came to London, in the first place, to see you, and ask your advice, you were ever my guardian-angel at Lindford, you know ; and secondly, I was tired of a village life, and wished to see the world.”

“ Came to see me, nonsense, George ; if you wanted to see me, you might have remained where you were. We shall return soon ; but who is your companion ? tell me that ; and the sooner you go back to Lindford the better ; or we shall have your mother appealing to Squire Passmore, and he will have you sought for.”

. “Return I shall not, Miss Gelica—of that I am determined—though your being there would be a great inducement; but I shall not return till I am in a position to do so—different from what I now am. All men are free, to act within the law, as they think fit; at least, so says Mr. Jacob Clarke; and I believe he is right. Mr. Passmore has nothing to do with me, nor I with him. My poor mother cannot keep me, I must keep myself—and I intend to do so—in a better manner than working for nine shillings a week. But you ask me who is my companion. He is a delegate—slaving for the rights of the people, whom, he tells me, are oppressed and crushed by the aristocracy—doubtless, he is right. I have joined the cause, and I intend to abide by his advice, and act according to my own views.”

“Why, George, you astonish me. You the boy of yesterday, who gathered cowslips to be-

deck my chamber from the meadows of Lindford—you the boy of yesterday, who ran of errands to secure me books from the village, and take letters to the post, now talking of the rights of the people. Well, you are changed indeed ; but it is evident you will return no more to Ashton farm or Lindford meads at present ; and perhaps you are right ; but be not over hasty in your decisions. Let me see you again before I leave London ; you know I am much interested in your welfare ; and who knows but you may rise to be a great man, why not—many have done so before, why not again. But recollect, do not trust your companion too much—” here she lowered her voice—“ I do not quite like his face. Come to us when this meeting is over. At all events, you know my address—you will write—but here comes my aunt, she is stiff as a poker ; and adores all great people, which means rich ones, I conclude ; however, I consider myself as good as

all the lords and ladies in the land ; and I shall see you rise. Now I must leave you,”

With this she took his hand, and pressed it with apparent warmth, and gave him a look such as woman only can give, which sent him forth from her temporary abode in the New Road—a chartist leader in imagination, her future husband in hope, and with a light heart and the world before him.

Refreshments were kindly though coldly tendered by Mrs. Jones, and readily accepted by Mr. Jacob, as it was never his habit to refuse ought that was given, save advice. And having shaken hands with the Miss Winters, as he would have done with the aunt, had she shown the slightest disposition to accept such familiarity—the chartist delegate and the candidate for such honour bid adieu—walking along the New Road, by way of a change, till they reached the head of Portland Place, and thence down Regent Street, in order that

George might witness the wonders of that aristocratic portion of the metropolis, they once more gained Norfolk Street, and prepared themselves, by the aid of a substantial meal, for the labours of the night.

CHAPTER VI.

We have strict statutes and most biting laws.

At the back of the house, inhabited by Mrs. Jones, there was a long, narrow room, two windows of which looked on the ever moving waters of the Thames, while another at the end alone received the light from a small courtyard. This room was probably, in former

days, a work-shop or store-room, of little import, save to those curious in detail. It is now, I fancy, a portion of the printing office belonging to the highly respectable and amiable proprietor of the *Mark Lane Express*, and sundry other public periodicals of interest and value.

On the evening to which I refer, a large fire crackled and blazed on the hearth, while in the centre of the room, a long table was placed, covered with green baize, and lined on each side and at the end by chairs of all sorts and sizes; the floor was, in a great measure, carpeted, and altogether it bore an appearance of much comfort if not elegance.

This apartment was gained by a narrow staircase, leading from the body of the house, and from one of the windows there was a balcony, from which a flight of steps descended to a pier or jetty, from which a person might arrive or embark without the slightest knowledge from those who might be inhabitants of

the house itself. In fact, it was the very place which, in the year 1845, would have brought to its owner a rental equal to an hotel in the West End; and had the worthy Mrs. Jones then have resided there, with her accommodating temper, talents for gastronomy and her cellar of excellent wine and spirits, be assured the good woman, would have died worth thousands, instead of in the work-house.

To be more explicit, it was the place of all others, as had it been built to order, for a railway all over the world company, there, in that quiet room, directors, provisional boards, engineers, and solicitors might have met periodically, without the slightest fear of being disturbed.

There, having decided on a line through mountains and over lakes, with an occasional viaduct of ten miles, or a tunnel through Porlock hill, they might have issued their prospectuses, received their deposits, and spent them

on hot brandy-and-water, and substantial luncheons, and the talented discussions being over, which raised their shares to a premium of fifty per cent. in their imagination, but to twenty discount in reality, they might have stepped forth each sunny Saturday of spring and summer time, and having taken water, sailed or steamed according to inclination, to Greenwich or Blackwall and spent the imaginary premiums that is the remainder of the actual deposits of shareholders in white-bait festivities and dishonourable festivity.

The meeting of the company, which were, however, about to fill that room, was not precisely of an engineering nature. And, at all events, if self was the principal object, which both in the one case as in the other, led them there, I am ready to believe, that there were a few—a very few—of those assembled, who spoke on the subject of the people's charter, who really believed that they were acting on grounds consistent with the spirit of

what they uttered ; still less of those who listened that believed. If one there was, however, who at the time then present, really believed that truth was truth, uttered from a conviction of their cause being a just and patriotic one, that person was George Radstock.

About half-past seven, one by one, and at intervals, some by the way of Norfolk Street, and some few by the landing from the river, about a dozen men, were assembled at Mrs. Jones'.

As the clock struck eight, all who intended to come, had apparently arrived, for the outer door of the house was fastened, and not a sound of voices or revelry could be heard from the street.

Such, however, was not the case in the room we have named ; with his back to the fire, stood Mr. Frost, whom I have already introduced to my readers, in earnest conversation with a man, evidently his superior both

as regards position in life, as in reference to those around him, who—with every word which issued from their lips invoking and advocating the spirits of freedom—nevertheless belied their own sentiments by paying most marked difference and cringing humility to the person in question, Mr. Mitchell—he was a dark, intelligent, well-dressed man, probably about thirty-five years of age, and about the middle height, but slender, and not apparently in the best of health.

In addition to this person who might be said to be the most prominent leader of the party out of parliament—those professedly who had seats in the commons, being only so in theory—or for some substantial reason to themselves—we shall only select two others. The remainder, there assembled, being, apparently, men of a middling class in life—delegates—or less active leaders whose opinions were nevertheless considered valuable to the cause, and whose ex-

ertions to obtain pecuniary aid had been most successful.

Of the other two individuals we are about to name one was a young man whose age probably did not exceed four-and-twenty, of an extremely feminine appearance, his hair, which was remarkably fair, fell on his shoulders in the fashion of a German student, his figure was slender, if not thin, and his countenance beaming with intellect; his upper lip was adorned with a growing moustache, and his dress, while it bordered on the eccentric, was nevertheless entirely distinguished with the attributes of a gentleman.

There were few, if any, in that motley assembly who possessed more natural talent, if not genius, than did this person, whom we shall name Miravale—and that he did possess such qualities, few were better acquainted than himself—pity that they were not exerted in a better cause and in better society; difficult

would it be to say why he was there, save from the freak of the moment, for his means were ample, and the doors of good society were open to him. Chartism, however, he had somehow or another confounded with patriotism, and to be a patriot, such as he believed a true patriot, was the utmost of his ambition. He had therefore thoughtlessly though freely, given his adherence to the cause, and was by no means niggardly in the giving of his means, which, to say the least of it, at all events, proved him to be honest in his views however mistaken.

The other man, physically and mentally alike, was about as great a ruffian as would well be met with, a sort of man who had his price for every thing—had he been an Italian, he would have ranked among the first of the class of bravoës, whereas, could he have claimed his birthright under the Southern sun of Spain, his stiletto would have been in great repute—for once

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"The evening advances," said Mitchell, "it is time, gentlemen, we proceed to business."

"The sooner the better," replied Miravale, for I have an engagement far from hence ere morning. "You Hercules—most substantial supporter of the people's rights," he added, laughingly addressing the rough man, "come and sit by me, I am the only person who can keep you in order—come, I say, and sit by me; when the meeting is over you may drink all the brandy and break all the heads in London, but to business now, we have much to discuss and arrange. The time advances and we must be acting."

With all the professions of freedom—all the pretendid dislike to the aristocracy, or what are termed gentlemen—language generally resorted to by men who term themselves chartists—it is strange, but nevertheless true—that no class of men yield to the authority of courage, birth, education, and

high breeding more than do the lower class, and uneducated population. The right which position gives, however, must not be asserted with anger or fear, but with boldness and firmness, far better even with kindness, and nine times out of ten the rude barbarian will yield—and such was truly elicited in the case of this rough and uncouth chartist, and his more refined leader. In like manner, there are none who bow so low to rank, none who seek to walk under the sunshine of aristocracy so yearningly as do the aristocracy of wealth to those of aristocratic station. The speculating millionaire may pretend to despise the impoverished lord, the pretence however is the only real part of the matter.

Mr. Mitchell took his seat at the head of the table, and silence was demanded.

“We have met once more, my friends,” said he, I trust calmly to discuss a subject which must be near the heart of every man who desires freedom of action and opinion under the

sovereignty of these realms, of every man, I say, who is not a willing slave in the length and breadth of the land we live in."

"That we starve in," said one of the members present, which caused a titter; silence however was obtained, and Mr. Mitchell proceeded:—

"We have met, I say, gentlemen, and I trust with but one sentiment, to discuss the propriety of presenting for the free discussion of the British Parliament the people's charter. Our object is not to obtain a hearing of these just grounds of complaint, confirmed by an overwhelming voice of a free people by violence or a physical outrage—but to form the groundwork of a petition which being signed by thousands of most respectable hard-working mechanics and rural labourers, we desire to present for the decision of the legislature and sanction of the throne. Hitherto we have met with every obstacle to our views which have been denounced as rebellious, illegal, unconstitutional

factious and un-English and so forth—idle assertions which must be met with firmness of purpose, energy and determination. With this intention, as you are well aware, we selected from our body—several partisans on whose ability and discrimination we could firmly rely, in order that they might travel through the country—circulate our views—explain our opinions—obtain resources from those willing to add to our sinews of war—I was about to say, but should more properly add, of peace, for peace can only long remain among a people who secure justice. And it also has been the duty of these delegates to bring with them the names of those willing to join in the people's cause, with whom, from time to time we may communicate in their several districts, as circumstances may appear to be desirous.

“These, our honourable delegates, I am happy to say gentlemen, have all returned at their appointed time to answer for themselves,

and I shall only say a few more words previous to requesting the pleasure of their presence, in order that they may give to you, their several leaders, a faithful account of their missions, the expenses of which you are aware, have been provided for from the pockets of an impoverished, I may say, a suffering people.

“It is a source of happiness to me, that I meet you here, to-night, with the power of assuring you that the passing of the reform bill has, in a trifling degree, ameliorated our unhappy position. The old school of tyrannical pluralists and sinecurists, are, in a slight degree, diminished, and I would hope still further diminishing. There are now not above three bishops, one hundred rectors and three hundred curates, who do nothing during the week, and deputise their duties, while they rest from their imaginary fatigues on the Sabbath; and I do not find above eighty rectors still in possession of three livings each. The charges on the civil

list for titled dames and others holding worldly rank, are somewhat diminished.

“ Indeed it would be loss of time were we to endeavour to decide on what imaginable grounds of public or other services could have rendered those parties who crowded the list, entitled to become state annuitants. A variety of other trifling reforms have been made. But reform must advance, not stand still, or its very word will become a laughing-stock to the people; and in this reform, my friends, we must include the people’s charter, a charter founded on justice, freedom, the rights of man, and the good of this mighty country, as well as the stability of the Crown. I say we must, without delay, present a petition to the Common’s House of parliament, signed by every good and true man to the cause, a petition which shall be engrossed on all the parchment to be purchased in the City of London—it shall be carried to the house by men, whose hearts beat for liberty and freedom, and who will have it. The voice

of the people, gentlemen, shall and must be heard, we will no longer submit to the tyranny and oppression which has hitherto obliged the working classes to live solely on well-cured bacon and home-brewed beer."

Mr. Mitchell thumped the table with great vehemence, and was greeted by cheers, some of the worthy leaders being almost roused from a slight nap to join in the general acclamation.

"No we must have free trade as well as other reforms, and then the poor man as well as the lord may perchance taste his claret, and see a sirloin on his Sunday's board, though that sirloin be cut from a bullock fed on a foreign pasture. But I will detain you no longer, for I am aware my friend Miravale is desirous to say a few words previous to receiving the reports of the delegates. The petition, however, must be our first step; you know the points—vote by ballot, universal suffrage, annual parliaments, &c., in fact, gentlemen, the comfort of the people of England

must be looked to, as well as the luxury of those termed the aristocracy. Our object is a national one, not a particle of self exists in the matter."

"Oh, no! oh, no! not in the least," was the general exclamation.

"We must obtain it, however," repeated Mr. Mitchell, "by the most peaceable means."

"And if not, put the matter into the hands of such fellows as our friend here and his followers," said one of those present, turning to the man who sat on the right of Miravale.

"Well, well, time will show," and Mr. Mitchell sat down amidst much applause.

It was then proposed to call in the delegates. Mr. Miravale, however, requested to say a few words, and the party gave way, as he was a man of known ability; moreover, as I have already stated he was a man of considerable means, the grounds, therefore, of his joining the chartist cause would be difficult to explain, save that he was desirous for some un-

usual mode of passing his time and spending his money, more exciting than those pursuits which generally lead men from the direct path. And to do him justice he was no common man. Whatever his faults, he had extenuating virtues among his fellows, for they found him to be honourable, and perhaps he was the only man among those with whom he was then associated, who was entirely unselfish; in regard to the views and opinions which he held, he firmly believed he was acting in a true spirit of freedom—and he spoke and gave freely where he thought his acts were justified. The qualities he possessed which, probably, were the most striking among that assembled mob, were first a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement. To take from life its misery and its evils was the ruling passion of

his soul, pity, I say, that such a man had embarked in so unsound a course of republicanism and with such a crew. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind, from which sprung hopes of liberty, inspiring a joy, an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. And there was much in this to lead so ardent a spirit headlong into a career—such as chartism—for those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this, and it must be still more difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around us, since they can scarcely remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years since, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from his earliest days an enthusiast in the feelings inspired by the re-action of the French revolution, and believing firmly in the justice of his

views, it can scarcely be wondered that a nature sensitive, impetuous and generous as his should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate, as he supposed, for others the evils of those laws, from which he believed so many to have suffered. He, therefore, spurned many advantages attending his birth, when he balanced them with what he considered to be his duty to his country and his fellow men. In fact he was generous to imprudence devoted to heroism.

It may be said this character is unreal. True it is no ordinary one, nevertheless there have been, there are, there will be again such men, though, alas, they will sooner or later find out, that which they support in the spirit of truth, that for which they are ready to sacrifice fortune, health, happiness, even life itself, is, after all, among the generality of men, only a bye-word for self-aggrandizement, and the fulfilment of ambitious and selfish views ; and

on the other hand, a mere desire to obtain by idleness and vicious means that to which they are the least entitled.

“I have but a few words to offer,” said Miravale, “I shall, however, speak freely. Mr. Mitchell is right—a petition must be drawn up, and submitted to the representatives of the people, would—I could say, they were better represented—to obtain proper signatures to this petition, and to have it properly presented, must be our first endeavour. The voice of the people must be heard, but that voice must be uplifted with reason and peace; impetuosity or anger, or physical outbreak, will only tend to injure a cause, which in other respects is justified as well by the laws of God as of man. I am aware that it is difficult for those to listen to the plea of reason who are groaning under the calamities of a social state; according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury, whilst another famishes for the want of bread. Difficult also

is it for him who is trampled on to-day as a slave suddenly to become liberal minded, forbearing and independent. This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be reformed only by resolute perseverance and untiring hope—long suffering and long forbearing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches us now; and I have only to add that I am ready to sacrifice wealth, time, health, even life itself, in the glorious object of obtaining the people's charter—provided the people will be guided by their leaders, in the mode suggested to attain those objects, and not give way—to the factious outcry of those who would desire to gain their ends by disobedience to the laws and acts unworthy of their country. The very moment that I am convinced that such is the intention of the great body of liberals—calling themselves chartists—that very moment I cease to be a

member of an association, based on the vilest system of democracy and republicanism. I by no means look on a member of parliament as the sole trustee appointed by those in whose services he has voluntarily enlisted. Whatever may be his local duties, I consider him as one elected by a portion of the people, not solely to act as their individual servant, but as a servant in the great cause of national welfare. And I would sooner be the poorest labourer who seeks to support life by the sweat of his brow, than go trammelled into the commons House of Parliament, bound to support the will of this section or that section, this class or that class. I do not consider that the true spirit of liberalism can be entertained by any man who undertakes to give his vote or opinion on any public measure, whose mind is actuated and hampered by the effect it may have on his individual constituency, when his heart tells him it is the people of this mighty kingdom—high and low, rich and poor—for whom

he is called to speak in words of truth. In like manner I shall not be directed by the individual welfare of any member of this community, but shall act as I conceive may best be conducive for the liberty of the subject. The erroneous opinions having reference to reform among the weak minded and credulous, are as ridiculous as manifold. I need scarcely add, however, that the object of reform is not to destroy the established church, upset the freedom, nor to invade the rights of the crown, but to restore, as far as the altered state of society will allow, those requisite orders to the exercise of their legitimate authority. Unfortunately the aristocracy have swallowed up not only the rights of the people and prerogatives of the crown, but also the immunities of the church. Having obtained power the aristocracy have exercised it solely for their own advantage. Nothing can be more unjust and oppressive. The comforts of one class ought never to be encroached on while another class re-

mains in the enjoyment of redundant luxuries. It is the legitimate object of good government to prevent the extremes of wealth and indigence, and diffuse equally through all classes the bounties of nature. But the system is widely different. It weighs chiefly on want and penury, it tramples on those already depressed, and crushes almost to annihilation the most useful classes by the unceasing levy of its imposts. Politically I shall adhere steadfastly to the six points of the people's charter, believing on my soul that the creed will be shortly accepted by the industrious of all classes; while upon the other hand I shall give my cordial support to any measure for the extension of the franchise, or doing away with existing restrictions."

It may readily be conceived that Miravale was a man looked up to and respected, as far as they respected any one, by the members of the association; looked up to because he had knowledge, which not one of them scarcely

could boast of; respected because he had means, which they all desired to share, and—according to their system of equality—ought to share, he, therefore, sat down amidst sundry greetings of applause.

The delegates now appeared personally to give their reports as to the state of mind in which they found the inhabitants of the several districts whither they had been wandering.

First came our friend Jacob, who introduced George Radstock to the assembly as a humble candidate for election—as a soldier in the cause of freedom. George shook hands with every member present, on its being ascertained that he was worthy of such honour; and after a few questions from the president, as to whether he voluntarily, conscientiously, and willingly joined in their good cause, and was ready to swear to the oath, and act up to it even with the risk of life, if required—which questions being frankly and satisfactorily an-

swered—the oath was administered; and by courtesy he was permitted to take a seat on the right hand of Mr. Mitchell.

“Now, Mr. Delegate Clarke,” said Mitchell, “be good enough to inform us in what state you found the rural districts? What places have you visited, and with whom associated?”

“I have walked over many a weary mile,” said Jacob, “by high-ways and by-ways, over mead and meadow, through market-town and village—gleaning and administering in the cause of the people. Here and there worthy men starving for improvident farmers, worked from daylight to sunset for a matter of seven shillings a week—meat they seldom eat—beer they never drink. This is no fault of the poor farmers—how can it be? their rents are fearfully high. The ground must be tilled, and the landlords must live in luxury—and so things go on—a poor enslaved and impoverished tax-ridden people, all anxious to give their mite

to assist the society in its noble efforts to obtain a just hearing in the Commons House of Parliament — from the Lords they expect nothing. But of all the places where my duties led me, there was none—no not one—where the spirit of discontent so manifestly displayed itself—emanating from oppression, misery, want, and tyranny—as that spot from whence I brought this young man, who now sits at the table of liberty, and surrounded by the advocates of justice and freedom. Remote from the great metropolis, ignorant in all things—save those dictated by nature—they endure their cravings of hunger, and submit to the slavery of animals, under the despotic government of a man, whose boundless wealth is as inexhaustible as his arrogance and remorseless disregard of the rights and happiness of his fellow creatures—this man I denounce to the club—his name is Frederick Passmore.”

“What do I hear?” said Miravale, “Frederick Passmore of Lindford,”—interrupting Mr.

Clarke—"my friend and college companion—the most noble-hearted, generous, and liberal-minded of men—termed a tyrant—pardon me, sir—I can scarcely credit this without you have had practical reasons for what you assert."

"I allude to the father, not to the son—the latter I neither saw, or, indeed, was he much spoken of, being absent. I allude more particularly to the father—and I believe I speak truly."

"Well, may be, may be so," added Miravale, "I must enquire further on this subject ere I am satisfied. Who else did you meet with at Lindford?"

"Mr. Winter, a wealthy farmer, somewhat inclined to despotism from ignorance, for which, in a manner, he may be pardoned, in consideration that he is totally uneducated, moreover, smarting under oppression himself, and therefore ready to oppress all others. He may be dealt with, however, and I fancy will soon be ready to add his

mite to secure the liberty of his fellow men. My young friend here, however, is well acquainted with these good people ; moreover, farmer Winter has two sisters now in London, and I shall make it my business to explain to them, that they are living among those, when in the country, who are worse than slaves. I must add, that throughout the whole rural district I visited, the people were discontented and unhappy, groaning under just feelings of oppression—overburdened with taxes—labour ill remunerated—mastersexacting—absentee landlords—estates in trust—in fact, an impoverished population, ready to free themselves from bondage, and give their adhesion to the people's charter."

Here Mr. Jacob took a seat, and appeared perfectly satisfied with himself, whatever was the effect on those to whom he was speaking.

Mr. Austey was the next delegate called on ; his mission had been confined to the large

manufacturing towns and districts, and he spoke with something more akin to truth, when he asserted, that apparent misery and discontent followed his footsteps on all sides ; as usual, however, he selected the worst points on which to ground his complaints ; he spoke not of bad times—a depressed market—or encreasing population—but tyrannical, rich masters—on the one hand, with pence-working, ill-paid slaves—on the other—an ill-represented people, who were doomed to misery and wretchedness, without the power of raising their voices in just complaint, or the means of making their position known to those, who professed to represent the working classes.

“Let us be properly represented in Parliament,” they said with one voice. “Give the poor, who labour for the rich, a voice in the forming those laws, we are bound to obey, and we will obey them, or we must strike a blow for ourselves. Vote by ballot—universal suffrage—well paid labour, and justice—bread

for our children, and good wages. Give us these, and we will complain no longer. Our patience is exhausted—we are all ready to join the chartists' cause—and when called on to act, with our lives, if required ; go, sir, tell our leaders this—tell them no longer to hesitate—entreat them to get up a petition, we are ready to sign it, and not a man will be wanted when his presence is required to follow the banner of liberty. These, gentlemen, were the sentiments which greeted me on all sides—need I say more ? The time has come for action—something must be done, and that soon, or more may come of it.”

“Bravo—bravo !” and true—were echoed by all, save the two men who were the best competent to judge on all which had passed—they were silent.

At length, Mr. Mitchell rose once more, and said,

“It is evident, gentlemen, that our first step is that of a humble and respectable peti-

tion to the House—this petition must be numerously signed. We must then select a fit representative in Parliament to present the same to the calm consideration of the British House of Parliament. I have no doubt of the result - it will have the desired effect. Let me remark, however, that all must be done peacefully, and within the law ; the very moment any resort to physical force is attempted, that very moment I erase my name from the association. My friend, Miravale—your worthy leader of the rural district party—will doubtless join me in preparing the petition, and as this young man, Mr. Radstock, I believe, is well acquainted with the habits of the country working classes, having been born and bred, if not one of them, among them, I propose to appoint him, at once, as a delegate under our worthy leader. It may be unusual to name one so recently come among us, to a post so important ; but I fancy I have some judge of character, and he will not disappoint our con-

fidence. Shall it be so, gentlemen?—it is for you to accept or decline.”

The proposition being unanimously agreed to, Mr. Mitchell turned to Radstock, and obtained his cheerful acquiescence to the proposal.

“And now, gentlemen, with reference to the petition, I conclude there will be little difficulty in obtaining the signature of some thousands—what say you, Mr. ———? do you think you could exert yourself in this desirable matter?”

“There will be no great exertion as far as that is concerned,” said the Herculean Chartist. “Them as will not sign pleasantly, must be made to do so unpleasantly. It is of little import whether Mr. Jones sign for fifty Mr. Joneses or Mr. Smith for a hundred Mr. Smiths—it is all the same in the end—if Jones won’t sign for more nor himself, why Smith must sign for Jones, and so on; so, the sooner I have the parchment the better—and by the end of

the week, I will have a mile or more filled up. I expect, however, sixpence for each name—for walking about is dry work, and mayhap, should I find an advocate for freedom, who writes a good hand, why, a pot of beer, or glass of half-and-half, will make his pen run freely—and thus I shall save time, for he can just clap down half the names in England. And while he thus does his duty to the people's cause, they will not regret, to act honestly to an active labourer."

"Well, well, Mr. —, that is not precisely what I intended; however, the petition must be signed; and, doubtless, you will use proper discretion; in the meantime, it will be as well that our several delegates do their utmost to further such constitutional views."

The business of the evening being satisfactorily concluded, Mitchell and Miravale took their leave, while the remainder assembled around the fire in comfortable confab, almost

regardless of the subjects they had met to discuss.

And a vote was soon unanimously passed, that the people's charter was a dry and exhausting subject for human nature to endure for two long hours, and that the sooner they had a little refreshment the better. Supper was therefore immediately ordered; and as the worthy Mrs. Jones was accustomed to and consequently prepared for such order, no time was lost in placing it on the table. Thus the night waned in jollity and inebriety, many a song was sung, and many a tale was told, eliciting laughter.

Two alone of that mixed assembly thought of little else, save the good cheer, and the cheerfulness it caused; the people—their wants—their suffering—their freedom—or their slavery, was alike a dead letter in the conversation that ensued, and of those two—the one George Radstock, the other Jacob Clarke, what were their thoughts?

As regards the latter, his cunning mind had already caused him to dwell on the subject of Miss Winter's charms, while, on the other hand, his knowledge of her brother's substance, and his consequent belief that some solid provision might have been made for her, induced him to ponder on his chance of gaining a prize in the lottery of matrimonial speculation, which he judged, and perhaps wisely, might be more conducive to his comforts in after life, than the uncertain and wandering duties of a chartist delegate.

And George Radstock, there he sat, among the noisy throng, little thinking of, still less caring for the abundance before him; his whole mind was absorbed with the events of the night; he clearly discriminated between those who were acting with a true spirit of heart, in accordance with the assertions uttered by their lips, and those who were playing a game solely for selfish views of their own—he had

tact sufficient at once to discard and despise the latter, while his fevered brain throbbed with enthusiastic admiration for the former; Mr. Miravale, he had already half learned to idolise, Mr. Mitchell, to admire. His youthful imagination had pictured as true all that they had advanced. Young as he was, he was more than elated at the idea of already being chosen as a delegate in the people's cause; his wild, and as yet ill-formed ideas on the subject of freedom were in a fair way to become a madness; in the distance he had already imagined himself a leader, then a representative of the people in parliament, perhaps, the saviour of his country; and when he laid down his aching and feverish head that night on his pillow, the image of her, generally uppermost in his thoughts, was pictured as the guardian-angel, who was to lead him onwards in the rough and unsettled path of life he had chosen. No thought that night of his peaceful happy home. No thought that night of a mother, brother, sisters, who loved


him. No thought that night of the scenes of his innocent childhood disturbed his rest—he had chosen between the world's contending passions and miseries, and the comparative joys of honest labour. And he had chosen hastily—now the die was cast. The hour was too late for him to retract. Farewell peace of mind—farewell calm simplicity, and rustic content. Satan leads onwards a strong heart, and stronger faith may turn and defy him; a weak and ill-directed mind will follow, and be lost.

CHAPTER VII.

A fairer Isle,
Than Britain, never sun view'd in his career,
For all that life can ask, salubrious, mild ;
Its hills are green, its woods and prospects fair,
Its meadows fertile, to crown the whole,
In one delightful word, it is our home,
Our native Isle.

HAVE you stood on the —— and looked
downwards on the city of Rome. Have you
stood on the heights of Montmartre, and
watched the glittering sun rays sink in glowing
splendour on the golden dome of the invalids.
Have you, on a calm and splendid night of

summer, sat beneath the shadowing trees of the Villa Real Gardens, at Naples, and watched the glittering moonbeams on the vast and unruffled bay—or seen the gondola glide through the waters like a golden snake, each movement of the oars casting up showers of fire from the deep blue sea. Yes, thousands, and tens of thousands of my countrymen have seen all this, far more. The ice-clad mountains of Switzerland, the frozen lagunes of Russia. The glowing feverish sun of the east has sunk each night before their watching eyes. The vast rivers of America, Niagara falls, wide prairies, and endless forests, are no novelties. Wherever the footstep of civilised man has trod, you will meet with the print of an Englishman's foot. There is only one spot with which most men do not believe themselves thoroughly acquainted. And that spot is England. Yet I question whether there be not scenes as fair—skies almost as bright—and nature displayed in every



species of garb as beautiful in that as in any other country which God has blessed.

We had a king, possessing like most other men, many sins, and some virtues, it was related of him, that he never did a wise thing, and never said a foolish one. And one of these sayings was to the effect, that after all there was no climate like England; forasmuch as there was no day throughout the year, when, with a good coat and thick shoes, you could not go out. He was right; at least, I know of no country, save Great Britain, where one hour, at least, of those of daylight, that you may not take the air. In all others it is either too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. Precisely the same thing may be said of the face of nature. In all parts of Europe you meet with splendid scenery; but in no country do you meet with so little which is not absolutely uninteresting as in England.

In one of the fairest days of early May, with a bright clear sky over head,

the birds singing merrily, and all nature bursting into the luxuriance of summer, Frederick Passmore and his now, companion rather than tutor, stood on the Royal Crescent at Bath. To those of my readers, who have been there, on such a day, it will be for me merely to say that they will recall to mind the sensations created by so glorious a scene—if they speak truly, they will join with me in all the admiration I have myself, often experienced in such visit. In all they have seen in the land of the stranger, is there a finer range of buildings than that noble crescent—of all the cities through which they have wandered, is there one, taken as a whole, finer than this comparatively deserted city of palaces? no not one; then while you stand on that wide and airy terrace, how pleasantly does the eye wander to the south, over rich wood-clad hills, and scattered villas; look to the west, the meandering Avon winds its silvery course through a richly culti-

vated vale—that no country in the world can surpass.

On such a scene as this, Frederick and Eden were gazing with delight—they had arrived the night previous, which was one of utter darkness. Let all who desire to witness a sight worthy of admiration, visit this queen of cities.

As you proceed from the heights, which encircle three sides of the town—countless lights display themselves—it is, indeed, a fairy picture, worthy of a visit—however far the traveller journeys to behold it.

Frederick had watched all this, and when he stood in broad day-light, and all was clearly revealed to his enthusiastic and talented mind in the bright light of day, loudly did he pour forth his sentiments of admiration; sentiments in which he was warmly joined by his companion.

“ Oh, how I wish dear Mary and Augusta

were here to look on this scene of interest," said Frederick, "few there are who could enjoy it as they would; this is, indeed, a glorious country. With what pride I own myself an Englishman."

"I thoroughly concur in your admiration of all we look on," replied Eden, "and I feel with you, dear friend, that our pleasures would be doubly increased by the presence of those so dear to us both. I remark, however—forgive me that I name it—that she whom your kind father has raised from a position of poverty to her present place among his chosen guests, ever takes precedence in your thoughts. That she is one of nature's most charming children I admit. Yet one can never forget, that she is the daughter of one who labours for his bread. And I can scarcely conceive that you rank her with your lovely sister."

"And why not," said Frederick, with somewhat more than the quickness which was natural to him." I love my sister dearly, but I

see not the slightest reason, why Mary should not be classed with the first in the land. True, her rank may not be precisely that which is termed aristocratic, or her blood gentle ; but what of that, she has gained her present position, not from the chance of wealth being cast into her lap—not from the causes which many imagine give them the right to arrogate to themselves the place of those with whom they have no feeling—no sentiment in common—not by some lucky or speculative chance, but from her very childhood, has she evinced conduct, talent, mind ; and above all, heart, and innocence, and modesty of demeanor which few possess, and none would presume to question when once known to her. I love my sister fondly, truly, and well do I estimate her many qualities—but with all those qualities, she has not the mind of that dear girl whom my kind father has brought among us, and I repeat, much as I wish both the dear girls here—while the one would look on this fair scene, as do many

others, with sensations of true delight those of the other would be doubled, for what the eye saw, with joy—genius would teach her well to estimate.”

“ Well, well, your feelings are always strong and generous, particularly in reference to those in whom your affections are centered—and for my own part, I feel my heart to be so thoroughly wrapped up in all that concerns the welfare and happiness of your family—with which for so many long years I have been connected—that I look on you, as well as those of whom we speak, almost as my children. At all events, dear Frederick—you will pardon your old fond tutor if he thus presume to dictate to one, who is no longer under his control—I say, then, allow not your affections for this dear girl as yet to lead you beyond the feelings of brotherly love. I am not one of those who think so badly of the world—and, I do not maintain, however natural, that two young beings formed to love one another, and gifted as you both are, may

not day by day, aye, hour by hour, meet in the firmest friendship and affection, without falling in love—but this case is a rare one—and your position is perhaps more peculiar than generally falls to the lot of man—from her very childhood, you have watched the dawning of this young girl's beautiful mind ; a mind that truly tells her how deep the debt of gratitude she owes to you all. Your conduct to her has hitherto been noble and brotherly in the extreme—for her peace of mind, as for your own—I beseech you to think well of your relative positions ere you gain her heart, or lose your own. I fancy I know her well, and if I do so, I feel assured that the deeper her gratitude, the more ardent would be her affections ; and if so, doubly will she feel her misery ; for, be assured, the very truthfulness of her mind, if actuated by no other motives, were Frederick Passmore to declare to her ought but the love of a brother, would induce her to do her duty, and reject that love, though her life were the

forfeit. May I then entreat, nay, I do intreat, with not the slightest intention of dictation, I do urge you to ponder well on these matters, ere next you meet—and if you really love her, spare her such misery.”

Need I say that Mr. Eden’s companion was somewhat startled by this unexpected advice, arising solely, as he then thought, from his having expressed a desire that a dear and enthusiastic companion, in reference to nature’s beauties, should share his delight, the more so at the moment, that if his heart had been fairly put to the test, it would have passed through the ordeal of all, save a sincere affection and esteem for the subject of their conversation; but other thoughts once inspired, how rapidly they fly through a sensitive brain, and thus do we with every good intent, often proffer unseasonable advice which has precisely the contrary effect for that which it is intended; and so was it with Frederick, at this time he replied, and replied truly.

“ Fear not, I have no intention as yet, of putting dear Mary’s love or gratitude to the trying ordeal, to which, you doubtless, in every possible kindness allude. I have scarcely commenced life, and I have yet much to see, much to acquire, ere I select a future mistress for Lindford Hall. But of this, be assured, Eden, when, if ever I do, neither birth or wealth will influence me in the slightest degree. As regards the former, though I can boast of no titled ancestor—I am descended from those who have fought and bled for their country—in many a hard fought field, where chivalry and honour were somewhat more estimated and justly rewarded than they now are. I can also boast of ancestors who have not only risen from the people—not, mark me, by any lucky chance, or speculative gain—but by the labour of the mind, and the labour of the body, and who having made their place among men, have for years really and faithfully represented them in Parliament, and advocated the cause of

civil and religious liberty when—the virtue, as it is—was looked on almost as revolutionary—wealth I have enough, and more than enough ; therefore, should it ever occur to me that dear Mary would remain in Lindford Hall,” added Frederick, laughing, “ and take me in as a lodger, the fact of her having been born in a cottage would not have the slightest effect in altering my opinion.”

“ It ought not, but recollect your position in the county, the great landed property entailed on you, and the consequent weight in the county. The probability which I trust will be realised, that you will one day be elected as member for the county. And if so, your position will be a trying one—with your present sentiments of freedom—which you know are even now looked on with no favourable eye by the landholders ; moreover, you have abilities of no common order—abilities, which, if properly directed, may call you to place and power ;

and then would it be well, when you kneel at the foot of the throne, to present her dearest to you in life—to hear the assembled crowd around remark, with derision ; ‘ that is the rich and distinguished Mr. Passmore ; the lady on his arm was a labourer’s daughter.’ ”

“ Your reasoning really causes me amusement, dear Eden. You speak as if all these matters were ; and, instead of making the best of our time in wandering about this beautiful city, here we are, walking up and down the Royal Crescent, at Bath, you offering, and I most humbly receiving advice as to future matrimonial prospects. But truly do you know the world when you speak of the rich and distinguished Mr. Passmore. Alas, a man may have all the good qualities—all the virtues—all the talents—every recommendation under heaven, to make him acceptable, nay even loved and esteemed by his fellow man ; but if he possess not wealth, he is poor indeed. Shakespere—ever true to

nature—Shakespere, who read men's hearts as they ought to be—such as no man ever read them before, or ever will again, said :—

He that steals my purse, steals trash,
But he that steals my reputation,
&c., &c.

This, however, was as it ought to be, in the true spirit of nature, and honour—but is it carried out ; alas, no—ten thousand a year is a reputation—which sin on sin will scarcely injure—even five—will enable a man to be a tolerable reprobate—but alas, for him who possesses nothing but the labour of his mind, though rich it may be in abundant love for man's gratification, he is poor—let his foot slip—bethe slip ever so trifling—men never listen to extenuating circumstances—down he rolls, headlong in public estimation—such a man may go and hang himself. You were right—wealth first—mind next—this is well suited to a nation

of shopkeepers. I am inclined to hope, however, there are a few, who view human nature under different circumstances—and who would feel proud even in the association of a labourer's daughter. But, understand me, I do not allude to a girl who carries a milking-pail on her head, and her shoes under her arm. I do not allude to a plump, red-faced, red-headed, hard-featured girl, who neither knows how to write, or even to read, though her heart may be as noble, indeed, far more so than one which beats beneath a vest covered with gold ; and far more virtuous than many whose blood runs through veins cleansed by generations of worldly honours. I allude to a labourer's daughter whom God has gifted with a mind and heart—which, assisted by education, makes her one of nature's fairest children. And as I should not precisely like to introduce at the head of my table one whose person did not in some measure assimilate with such natural and improved advantages, I will ask you if Mary would not grace

such a position, and if so, why are there not many more. Indeed, I venture to say, search England through, and you will find hundreds of such women. But an ill-directed education tends solely to make girls, so born, endeavour to vie with their betters, without the mental gifts to enable them to do so—only makes them ten-fold more vulgar and unpresentable than the girl with her milking-pail; who, at all events, has the advantage of being natural. And if nature be combined with good breeding and education, then we find, and then only, that ease of manner, that true refinement of mind, which is the greatest charm of society. But who have we here—Miravale—my friend Miravale, I declare.”

“What, Frederick, and in Bath. I am delighted at this meeting, of all men I am rejoiced to meet you—how much I have to say—how much to tell, since we parted last in Oxford. How rapidly time flies—only fancy, it is more than a year since we shook hands under old

Tom. And you declared nothing would induce you to visit foreign lands till you had visited the most interesting portions of your own. So I conclude you are on your travels."

"I am so, Mirayale, and what can be more charming than the spot on which we now stand. But tell me, why are you here, from where, and what is your purpose, for if you are not much changed, I fancy it is not solely in search of the beauties of nature or charms of art; you have some other purport in view. Above all things, I would hope that you ramble not in the search of health, though you are pale and delicate, far more so than when we were wont to pass our evenings on the Isis, or the cricket ground—pulling for the prize, or playing in the match; in both of which manly exercises you greatly excelled. You rather look as if you had nightly resorted to some debating club, as was our wont at Christ Church, when you far surpassed me in your liberal sentiments."

"You say truly, Fred; of late I have been

much interested in the welfare of the people of this great nation ; but we must have some private talk on these matters ; for now that I have once more found you, I shall not so easily part. You know, perhaps, I have lost a kind, though somewhat eccentric, parent, since we parted. And though an only son and heir to a large property, which, during his lifetime, he imagined, was not intended to be expended, and therefore, left me sometimes penniless, I now find myself free to go whither I will, and do what I will my own. In land, my possessions are not great, the few tenants I have, are, therefore, easily made happy ; but my riches are far more than I require for myself. And my object is, therefore, to see what can be done to ameliorate, in common with others, the position of my suffering fellow creatures. My only hope is that I have not selected an unsuccessful course, or joined an unconstitutional cause, But let us walk. These parks are beautiful,

are they not—what a beautiful city—fine bright air—wide streets—noble buildings—and how well situated, how little apparent poverty. Here I must not linger long, or I shall soon fancy all the world have as few pecuniary wants as myself; and become an idle, useless, selfish member of society.”

“No, never,” replied Frederick, warmly. “A man of your sensitive mind and warm heart can never sink into the selfish bigotted drawling being of little minds, with no feeling to countenance great objects, far less objects tending to the happiness and amelioration of the position of his fellow men, no, rather will he trifle away his life in the pursuit of some peurile or delusive object, which may serve to employ his time, but can never be the means of advantageous results to ought but his own satisfaction. Men of little minds and ungenerous hearts are rarely liberal towards even the opinion of others; obstinate and opinion-

tive themselves, they always view the acts of others with derision; and thus we find the miserable schemes with which the world is daily overwhelmed. If one man invents a pill, another is immediately advertised to surpass it. Even the science of medicine, which men of the highest eminence have passed their lives in bringing to perfection, is now almost annihilated by some silly, weak-minded, obstinate individuals, who have nothing else to do than to fill the heads of silly old women, with Homœopathy and every other Apathy and humbuggery available. And this, let me add, is not confined to those who endeavour to live by such folly and knavery, but those who I know, pass days and hours, and spend fortunes in such unworthy pursuits. But you, dear Miravale, are actuated by higher motives than such as these, and whatever are your pursuits, assured am I, they are founded on some reason, or kindly motive for the welfare

of mankind, or you will renounce them the moment you discover their fallacy."

"I will, Fred, be assured."

"But now tell me, are you wedded to Bath—and how long have you been here—will you dine with me to-day at the White Lion—you see I do not select the more aristocratic York House—and I find myself well suited. What say you, Eden, will you not come? And when you have fully visited this neighbourhood, why let us join our forces, and proceed hence to Bristol; a sight of a mercantile city will be somewhat new to you, who have so long been nestling amid the groves of Lindford, moreover, there are few more interesting cities in our merry England. It teems with sources as well as buildings of historical interest, the air is not impregnated with smoke; and when tired of the city—we will on to Clifton. I have never been there since my boy-hood. But if my memory fail me not,

there are few more beautiful places in this wide world."

"With all my heart, Miravale," replied both his friends.

And having enjoyed a ramble round the beautiful park, visited the upper crescents of Landsdown and Somerset—walked on Camden place, from one and all of which, the most interesting and extensive views are beheldt—he friends parted to meet again at six; when dinner being over, with an account of which I am not disposed to gratify the lovers of such events, having just dined myself—

Miravale pushed the claret to Frederick, saying—

"Well, this unexpected meeting has given me real pleasure; and, to tell you the truth, I was about to write to you; but I delayed on this point, for the reason, that my letter must necessarily have been so long, I scarcely could

have hoped you would have read it, and again, that I should have been obliged to touch on subjects which would have caused me some delicacy; but now that I have once more taken your hand in mine. I feel—I have no longer a doubt, but that you are precisely the same Frederick Passmore, heart and mind, who was my friend at college—all my anxieties have evaporated I was ready to break a lance in your behalf before—I am now ready to fight to the death.”

“In what have you ever doubted me? True I have not gone so far in the opinions, called liberal, as you have, but I have been ever truthful with you; and in the main, I fancy there is little even on those points to divide us. But tell me, who has dared to malign me?”

“As regards yourself, no one. As regards your father, yes. But first answer me. Do

you know a person named Radstock, George Radstock, from your neighbourhood, a quick, clever lad."

"Undoubtedly, I have known him from childhood ; he was the son of a most worthy labourer, on my father's estate, whose sudden death, arising from an accident, caused much sorrow to us all ; the lad was idle and inactive, totally unlike the family to which he belonged, with a head ever wandering on subjects far beyond his station. I was absent at college, when a wandering delegate from the chartists arrived at Lindford, and endeavoured to fill the heads of our people, from all accounts, with strange theories. Those that were actually happy and contented, he endeavoured to prove were only so in imagination, and those who desired to be so, slaves ; he certainly did no good to our peaceful neighbourhood, but at the same time, I would hope little harm ; he made one convert, however, and that was George Radstock,

who, I fancy, followed him to London. I fear he will do no good there ; if in my power, I would gladly save him from evil, for the sake of his poor but honest mother. What can you tell me to this end."

"Why simply this—there is an association formed in London, for the amelioration of the position of the people. You well know I have ever had this subject near at heart ; in days gone by, we have often discussed the question, and though on the whole our opinions assimilate, we do not altogether agree. Since I last saw you, however, I have mixed much with the working classes, in order to see into the real state of things, and I am convinced there is much cause for complaint. I have therefore been induced, after much consideration, together with others, who have position at stake, both as regards birth and wealth, to join this association, of which I have become a humble leader. But understand me, dear

Fred, I am by no means carried away by revolutionary or republican measures, cling fondly to monarchical government, and the moment the slightest attempt is made to disturb the order of things by physical force that instant do I quit the body which I have unhesitatingly joined. As I said before, however, there is much and reasonable ground of complaint. The legislature is unjust towards the poor, too liberal towards the rich; the people are ill represented—the suffrage is not sufficiently extended—vote by ballot is required—parliaments are too long. I support the people's charter, and will do so with means and voice as long as their wants are calmly and peacefully advocated. But this lad, George Radstock, is truly among us, brought there by the very man who must have visited your neighbourhood. I have no opinion of this man, though he is, as you say, a chartist delegate; and I shall watch him narrowly, be-

cause I am sure he has already proved false, in his assertion, having reference to your father. Your friend George, I shall take under my charge; he has already made some way in the opinion of the assembly, and is appointed a sort of delegate under my control. I shall endeavour to prevent any rashness on his part; for I am convinced, that his association with such men as Jacob Clarke, and others, will tend speedily to put his neck into a halter; as, while they are acting with care, and only speaking rebelliously when in the hearing of those who, for their own sakes, dare not divulge what they hear, he will act, and that unconsciously of the crime he may commit."

"You astonish me, Miravale. I was indeed aware that your opinions of freedom ever ran somewhat beyond the limits of my power to agree with you. Still I was not aware you had joined with a body of men, who, I confess, I look on as the most selfish and ill-conditioned

of this country—men whom I had hitherto believed acted solely on the principle of nothing to lose but life, but everything to gain by disorder. Moreover, if I err not, there are considerable subscriptions making by the deluded poor, to support the extravagances, mis-termed expenses, of the assembly you name—a sort of self-constituted parliament for the people; and no less grieved am I than astonished to find such men as you—and others like you—for you have said as much—mixed up in their misdemeanours—and earnestly, nay, affectionately, would I hope that even now it is not too late to break your connection with such a mob of ill-educated, and ill-disposed wretches, terming themselves patriots. There is one thing, however, that consoles me—my friend Miravale is not the man to listen calmly to opinions tending to depose the sovereign power of these realms, or do ought to interfere with the peace of the country; a long, expensive, and

bloody war has sufficiently impoverished our country—may God preserve us from civil and internal commotion. Truly did I advocate the grand measure of reform—earnestly do I hope for ought in legislation tending to free us from the weight of taxation, and the enlargement of men's views in the adaptation of civil and religious freedom; but chartists and chartism, can do nothing for England, nothing for Englishmen. Give the labourers work—improve your estates—live on your property—and within the bounds of your means—let the labourer be well paid, for he is worthy of his hire. Legislate for England as a nation, not for social bodies. Give to all men the power of exchanging the rich produce of the earth which God has bestowed on man's labour, whether it be from the east or the west, the north or the south—listen not to the memorial of the hundred, if such be to the detriment of the thousand—and, as far as may be, do

justice to all. But neither this scoundrel, Mr. Jacob Clarke, who has already belied the acts of my excellent father, or a scape-grace like George Radstock, though he may rise to speak treason in your assembly, can ever convince me, that the people of England, if not quite so justly represented as they might be, and as I would fain hope will be, are not better represented than any other country in Europe ; and I repeat my hope, that you will soon be disgusted with your association. When we parted at Oxford, you gave me reason to hope you would visit Lindford Hall ; let me urge on you to do so, shortly ; come there, and judge yourself, as to whether your delegate has reported truly of landlord or tenant ; we can offer you society better than it appears you have recently sought. My father will be rejoiced to see you—my sister will welcome you—and a young friend, whom we all esteem, nay love, will give you some proof that the people are

not all actuated on such motives as these chartists."

"You speak warmly, Fred; let us therefore, for the present, drop our argument. I accept your kind invitation, and ere long trust to find myself among those who I am well assured are all you describe; but let me ask you one more question—have you a tenant by the name of Winter? and does this Winter glory in being the brother of two fair sisters now in London?"

"We have; a wealthy, as the term goes, a wealthy farmer, a man who rents a considerable number of acres on the Lindford Hall estate, and possesses a freehold of his own: he is not a wise man—but I have every reason to believe, is an honest one—his greatest fault is the desire to ape his superiors—and this solely on the ground of his means, as he has neither mind or education—but he is altogether a harmless, worthy man. He cultivates his land

and pays his rent—but never endeavours to improve it. As regards these sisters, they are silly, though unoffending girls—the one thinks of nothing but dress, and the desire to be thought a fine lady by those below her ; the other is far more quick, reads much trash, is excited and influenced by what she reads, and is just the girl to lead such a lad as George Radstock to destruction, he is already influenced by all she says and does ; and if, as you say, she is in London, it fully explains the readiness with which he followed your delegate.”

“Now I see my way clearly with these persons,” said Miravale, “and I shall act accordingly. But you must promise to remain my companion for a time. I have much still to say to you, both of the present as well as the future ; so to-morrow go with me to Bristol.”

“Most willingly—I have business there—and your society will make that a pleasure,

which otherwise would have been irksome—so name your hour—order your horses—and now let us go forth again for a ramble about the city.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Behold ! yon breathing prospect bids the muse,
Throw all her beauty forth.

THE railways were laid down only in the imagination of engineers, at the period of which I write, in the West of England. Stage coaches and post-horses were still in all their glory—from Bath to Bristol—now by express train the

matter of an arrow's flight—was then a pleasant drive, occupying well nigh two hours, over one of the finest roads in England through a vale of beauty—watered by the Avon, diversified by the small town of Keynsham, noted in the times of civil war. And by this route, in pleasant association and converse, we entered the smoky city.

“There is more of life here,” said Miravale, breaking in abruptly on a subject of agriculture which had last been spoken of, “there is more of life here than in the splendid Mile Street; though, forsooth, there appears more of dirt and misery, also. Look at these numberless masts.” (We were then crossing what is termed the Bristol Bridge.) “Nothing speaks more truly to an Englishman's mind of his country's wealth and strength. look at the floating colours from the vessels, colours which have never been lowered in dishonour to the foe. Oh! my beloved country—if true

to thyself and to thy people, as thou art brave in war, and generous to thine enemy, who would not glory in his birthright, and offer up prayers in thankfulness to Him who has so blessed this favoured land.

“And why not feel so now, Miravale, for believe me, 'tis more, far more in theory than in fact, that Englishmen desire to change. The poor complain of misery—let them have labour—the tenant complains of his landlord—if in justice, let him lower his rents; if he ~~cannot~~ not do so without intruding on his luxuries, let him do that which honour demands, and christian feelings dictate, renounce his abundance. If he has improvidently nay rashly squandered that wealth which has been confided to his charge, he sins, selfishly sins for all must suffer.”

“You speak truly, Fred,” therein rests the difficulty, but here we are at the ‘White Lion’—a good sign. ’Tis an ancient quaint hostelry,

and could each chamber tell its tale, the heart would overflow by turns with joy and sorrow at hearing such recitals—but I must leave you for an hour, I have the address of a honorable friend, with whom I desire to have some converse, and then to view the ancient city ; you will order dinner—a man must dine—at any hour which suits you—for to Eden's society, I shall, for an hour, leave you."

Passing from the hotel, towards High Street, for he had precise directions as to where he should find the object of his search, moreover a tongue in his head to enquire, Miravale stood for a moment to gaze with interest on the ancient and truly picturesque building, now occupied by what is termed the Somersetshire bank, a house of business second to no provincial one in the United Kingdom, for wealth, respectability, and integrity, and then, walking onwards, turned to the left, down Bridge Street, then referring to his memoranda,

knocked at the door of a comparatively shabby house, which being opened by an equally shabby maid-of-all-work, he requested to be informed as to the presence of one Mr. —.

“ I’ll see if master be in, sir,” said the girl ; at the same time half shutting the door in his face. Miravale, however, patient in most things, awaited her return ; when being informed that master was at home, he followed her into a small smoky apartment ; the only apparent furniture it contained being a table and two broken chairs, with a glass over the chimney-piece, in which were placed innumerable letters, or the addresses of such, doubtless to impress on the mind of a visitor the vast correspondence and consequent importance of the occupier. I have, however, more particularly dwelt on the nature of the residence, to show, in a measure the class of individual to whom even the well-educated and honest chartist leaders were wont, at times, to com-

mit the utmost confidence in the belief that they were instrumental in carrying out their sentiments to the working classes. At length, however, a head peeped into the room, from a glass door that led to the interior of the house, shall I describe it:—

“It is a faithful picture of the man. It is not for me to believe him—yet if that face spoke ought of the heart’s workings, I should imagine chartism must have been at a low ebb, to have found it necessary to employ such as he. Miravale had never previously beheld the man, who, having duly surveyed the person of his visitor, now entered. He was short in stature, thin, and apparently emaciated, either from ill health or habits of life—sparkling black eyes, similar to those of a Scotch terrier, but betokening rather of cunning than intellect, which twinkled and searched his visitor as he spoke, but never looked him he addressed fairly in the face for a second, his head was rather long

and narrow, covered with short grisly hair, nose sharp and aquiline, manner—restless, and undecided—with an attempt at persuasion. Having accosted Mr. Miravale, as to his business with the manner of a man whose conscience, being unjust, is ever in fear of evil, he handed one of the chairs with an attempt at courtesy, and begged he would be seated. This being declined, standing with his arm resting on the chimney-piece, Mirivale produced his introduction and stated his name ; when great was the change which came over the surface of that cunning face—humble, almost cringing and servile was the man to his superior, who probably not ten minutes previously, had sworn to his equal that not a man who possessed a freehold in the land, but was a despot for whom the humble class were slaves.”

“I am told,” said Miravale, “that no one in the City of Bristol can give me better information as to the state of the working

classes, than you can. Having told you my name and the purport of my visit, as well as from whence and from whom I come, I fancy, I need scarcely add, that you may divulge all matters best calculated to the interests of those we seek to benefit. Moreover, all information as regards this wealthy crowded city will be important. Pardon me however that I request brevity of detail, for my visit here will be short. Moreover those with whom I travel do not precisely think with me in all things, and they require a portion of my attention."

"Well, sir, I shall be brief—trade here is bad, and will be worse. The few who have enriched themselves by the people's labour, and who, moreover, have, in a great proportion, been, labourers themselves, are the very worst of masters. The working men are ill paid and discontented. The masters hard and illiberal, some hording their gains ; others having amassed riches revel in extravagance, vying with

those called the aristocracy and landed proprietors, living on the capital the labouring classes have accumulated for them, becoming actual or fraudulent bankrupts, thus throwing thousands out of work, and yet by some means or another a secret only known to thousands, they still ride in fine coaches or ride on fine horses. These are the men, many of them at least who do far more harm to the country at large than all your dukes and lords in the land, whom it is the delight of many to denounce.

“Others speculate, and while speculating nothing is too good—no wages too high for those whose slavery can tend to obtain the lucky chance. Once, however, gained, heaven help those who have toiled to aid in the making these colossal fortunes—on the other hand, should they become bankrupt, God be with the hundreds they deprive of bread.”

“This is indeed an unhealthy state of things,” said Miravale, with a sigh, “but tell

me more of these great merchants of your city, —what are their general opinions as to the political state of the nation?"

"That is easily told, sir; while they are striving to enrich themselves others are starving for their enrichment. The people's wrongs—the depressed people—the ill-represented people—the load of taxation which hampers all industry—the spirit of industry is ever in their mouths, if not in their hearts, while they are speculating there is nothing too liberal in legislation, nothing too good or too easy for the multitude—once the position or fortune is gained—little important by what means—about they go—like heathens—avaunt the idea of freedom of opinion, still less of free-trade. Protection, monopoly, and self, is their war cry. I tell you sir, there may be one here or one there among the peers, who are despots in blood as by birth and others from honest conviction, but not one among the lot are half so oppressive or half so arrogant or bigotted as are the

aristocrats of to-day's wealth and yesterday's beggary, as may be their fate again to-morrow. But you know full well all our wrongs, sir, better than I can explain them ; and it is for the convention to urge on the Commons' House of Parliament, a speedy recognition of their claims. I understand a petition is under consideration—let it be sent here—it will be largely signed. But how long do you remain, sir? I shall be glad to mention your arrival to some of our people, who will gladly welcome you. Perhaps, sir, you will address them. The very sound of a voice which gives hope, will cheer us on to fight our way to justice."

"You must pardon me—it is not my intention to remain here long, my object is rather that of visiting the beauties of nature by which I am told your city is surrounded, than of entering into any public duties ; hearing however we had a delegate in Bristol, from whom I might possibly obtain some information in

reference to the working classes of this great commercial city, I sought you out and am glad that we have met ; but mention nothing I pray you of my visit, neither my health or my time permit me more to delay."

" Well, sir, let me at all events be your guide. I am born and bred a freeman of the city, and it is said we are an active minded race ; men, sir, who ever sleep with one eye open. I am well acquainted with every yard of ground within some leagues around the city, and if my presence be not intrusive, I shall have pleasure in giving you all the information in my power."

" Be it so ; with thanks, I accept your offer ; should the weather be fair, we propose starting early to visit Clifton, and its environs ; our breakfast hour is nine, pray join us at the White Lion."

To some of far less degree, than those of whom I speak, the presence of a chartist dele-

gate, more particularly one such as Mr. —, would scarcely have been welcome. Those he was about to meet however, had no particular feelings on this head. A man was a man to them, whether dressed in the garb of a mechanic or in kersey-mere and velvet. They knew full well their own position, and feared little to injure it by association with those below them, more particularly if information was to be gained; and this gentleman was at all events not intrusive; whatever he might have been among his equals, like many of his class, he was humble even cringing to his superiors; whilst Eden ever kind and gentle, little cared who was there, save one who interfered with his avocations. The Exchange clock of Bristol struck nine, therefore as Mr. —, arrived at the Hostellerie, and having been duly admitted and welcomed kindly by Miravale, and named to his friend as a person well acquainted with neighbouring localities, who being known to him had kindly

offered to be their guide, the party seated themselves before a breakfast such as the White Lion can produce, though I must admit the interior economy of that house of public entertainment by no means, save as regards the kitchen department, supports the character which outwardly the visitor might be led to believe; for the comfort of the rooms, however, or for their appearance. Mr. —— cared little, sufficient for him were the beef steaks and the eggs, and the broiled salmon and the tea, which he charged again with renewed energy, to the astonishment of his entertainers, and to his own most entire satisfaction. The best of joys as well as the worst of evils, however, have their end, and so had the delegate's breakfast, and the morning being fine, the party with this well fed addition to their number, were soon wending their way up the steep hill of Park Street, towards the environs of the city, and the adjacent downs whose natural beauties

are of the most splendid description. Speculation, increase of population, and man's restlessness have however strangely altered this beautiful spot of late, and much has been done to destroy that which God has so graciously bestowed on man. Buildings have sprung up on every side, where, hitherto gardens and green fields and delightful dells were seen, that which was once merely a rural village, has now become a town, with thousands to inhabit it, shops which can vie with Regent Street, and houses almost equal in magnitude to those of Portland Place, have sprung up like mushrooms on all sides.

"I never visit this spot," said the guide, "and look on yon blue mountains of Wales, and the glittering river which divides it, that I do not desire to turn my back for ever from the noise of cities, and become a resident in rural scenes.

"Your feelings are not uncommon," replied Frederick Passmore, "'tis a glorious scene,

indeed, and I for one thank you much that you have led us to this favored spot. But let me ask who claims the ownership of those vast woods and that apparently wide park, which appears to extend almost to the centre of the valley; if I err not there is a mansion beyond the crest of the hill, for the smoke of many chimneys rises through the trees."

"You are right, sir, quite right, there is a mansion and a park, and many a thousand acre which claims one master," he added.

"A rich merchant, retired from the city, who has possessed himself of that which once belonged to a long line of noble ancestors?"

"No, sir, no; we have such not far from hence, as you will see ere long; indeed the eye need only wander across the Avon's waters to witness the boundaries of such an estate. But that to which you allude, is a property, the possession of which any man might be proud of —yet it is one that I never look on but with

wonder, at the marvellous dispensations of God. He who claims it as his own, has never toiled to gain it—he who daily looks from out his window on countless acres, never gained them by labour for his fellow men, either in the battle-field—the senate—or by his powers of mind—it came to him from father to son, through successive generations—who can count their lineage through some centuries? And how have they repaid that Providence, who have awarded them such wealth. You will shrink from the recital, or I much mistake your feeling, when I tell you, that of four score thousand pounds per annum, which, in bare rental from the soil, are paid into his coffers, not a fourth are ever expended on the property—the people—or at all—now, sir, it is not for me to comment on the disposal of an individual's private wealth—as a private individual, he may cast it into the waters of the Severn, if such be his pleasure; but 'tis such things, almost worse

than extravagance, which make the people cry aloud in agony for bread. What if this man spent freely in giving honest labour to thousands?—what if this man gave yearly of his abundance one score thousand pounds? How many the heart he would gladden — how many the heart he would make rejoice, even were he to squander his abundance—his wealth might tend to enrich some; but thus to hoard it—heaven bless the man, it has been ill bestowed on such as he.”

“Indeed, there is some justice in your remarks,” said Miravale; “but time passes—we have lingered long in this beautiful spot, and as I wish to return to London on the morrow I am anxious to see all I can of this interesting neighbourhood.”

“Be it so, sir; you will not be disappointed we can walk down to the trees below, and I will beckon your carriage to meet you.”

The friends drove onwards through some

of the most beautiful country in all England, which is saying much, and yet I speak truthfully, for I draw from life not from fiction—would that I sometimes could, when I speak of the errors of man—till, at length, they arrived at another spot, scarcely less lovely than the last, and I am obliged thus to dwell on scenery, which, to some, may not be unpleasing, in order to bring forward characters, who have lived and acted in the theatre of life.

From the point on which they had once more alighted, was another beautiful prospect opened to view, but of a somewhat different nature; almost beneath them lay the broad and glittering Severn, on which many a sail was seen, bound to foreign shores, laden with that wealth which hope, and speculation, and commercial enterprise sends forth to the world; the the hope of accelerated gain. Beyond the channel, even the houses of the Welsh coast were seen—for the air was clear—while to the

right stood an ancient mansion, enclosed in the most luxuriant evergreens, and overshadowed by the most splendid trees, which in size and grandeur, proved that, for centuries, they had stood through many a winter's blast, and many a returning summer, had cast forth their wide spreading foliage, beneath each of which many a head of cattle could have found shelter.

"This," said Mr. Eden, "to my taste, even surpasses, in magnificence, the spot on which we last looked with so much delight; but I must repeat the question of my young friend here, to whom belongeth that ancient house we have recently passed? there must be very few spots, even in this favoured land, that can boast of such beauty as that—such luxuriant evergreens I have never yet beheld, and these trees convince me no man of yesterday has planted them."

"You speak truly, sir. One whose blood has flowed direct from a noble line, at least for

a matter of six centuries, not long since claimed as the fine park we look on his own—his was the taste which directed the planting of the vast hills we look on. And if not greatly popular among the people of the city hard-by—for he was not one of us—at all events, he lived much on his estate, and paid large sums to the labourer. His chief delight was the planting of trees, and the petting of spaniels—and if the former did good, inasmuch as it circulated money among the poor, at all events, the latter did little harm. But he had lived his appointed time, and when God thought fit he should resign his soul, the title, old as it was, for a time became extinct, and the property was sold. But look yonder in that luxuriant vale—from which we are divided by the Avon—there stands another lordly pile—as ancient and as grand as this we now approach—marks the era of chivalry and feudal greatness.

“ Well, gentlemen, the whole may soon be said to claim but one master. And he but yesterday one of and with the people, is to-morrow designing and voting against them—yesterday, with shirt sleeves turned up to the elbows, and striving for the bread of life. To-day jostling with lords and ladies as were he one of them. Yet, despising them in his heart, from fear of being trampled on. But wealth, wealth—what will it not do—money, money, what will it not obtain? ’Tis not only parks and fine houses, rich meadows, lands, and vast woods—but it will place the foot on the Turkey carpet, which yesterday was without a shoe, and the yeoman in the presence of the Sovereign. And more, it will obtain place, and power, and consideration, and a name for every virtue under the sun. While he who is gifted with genius, high feelings of honour, high birth and capabilities, may go beg in the street. ’Tis precisely the same with many poor who are oppressed—a

helping hand in the hour of need—and justice done to character and abilities would save many from actual want, though, perhaps, never enable them to obtain riches, or even independence. Great fortunes are rarely made, save by mere lucky chance, or speculation, and then the man, yesterday a beggar, to-day becomes a prince; but these, mark ye, are the very men, who having started in life with every apparent feeling and commiseration for their fellow creatures, the very moment they have obtained the height of their ambition, put their faces, as it is said, and backs too forsooth, against every sentiment of liberality—every echo of reform. Their cry is the cry of protection; to protect what?—their own abundance. Not that I say such are the opinions or actions of him who lives in yonder mansion—he is unknown to me—and I would not desire to speak evil of my neighbour. Yet I question, if a chartist, known to be a chartist, would not be turned from the door as some

loathsome reptile—and yet, methinks there was a time when his ancestors would have joined the cause.”

“Well, the country is magnificent,” said Miravale, “and I own I envy him the possession of this fine place. A man might be well contented even if doomed for ever to look each morning on such charms as nature here presents, and he must have enough and to spare for those who belong to the estate.”

“There it is—there is the point; but who has ever enough, at least, aught to spare for his neighbour—were such things facts, as they are only fiction, save among the few and far between—rare, rare men—we should have little reason to complain. Was even the humblest portion of abundance given, and given freely, to aid labour, and prevent pauperism, as it is extracted by the law, the people’s petition might be a thing of naught, instead, as it will be, an everlasting document imprinted on the hearts of millions, who cry for justice.”

“Well, we shall see to that—we shall see to that; but look, Eden, how splendidly the sun is already setting beyond those blue tinted hills. I have scarcely ever beheld a scene in nature more striking, or if I may use the expression, more mentally soothing, yet the cravings of appetite must be satisfied, and I fancy if we do not hasten homewards, we shall scarce be doing justice to the promised talents of the Soyer of the White Lion.”

To those who have visited the rural beauties I have vainly endeavoured to describe, there may be little to interest them in a recapitulation, or of a detail of their many charms to those who have not; however, I may be the humble means of opening out a path of unexampled delight. Drive onwards then, through these magnificent elm trees, which, scattered over the fine park, add such beauty to the scene—drive onwards through these clustering evergreens, every one of which were planted

by the tasteful orders of the late lord of these luxuriant beauties—for to him be the praise for having turned barren hills into thriving woodlands, and wild pastures into gardens of Eden—indeed so proud was the aged peer of woodland scenery and foresterial pursuits, that hours each day were passed in watching his planters, and 'tis even now said of him, that his ghost may often be seen walking through the shrubberies at midnight, with a pruning knife in his hand. At all events, he never can be forgotten, while each returning autumn covers the hill-side with the beauties of the flowers and fruit of the arbutus and evergreen and ash—drive onwards through the clean and pleasant village of H—it is rich indeed in nature's charms; look at the neat trimmed church-yard, and luxuriant evergreens, which grow and flourish beneath the shelter of the house of God—a church, which, to speak truly, bears no outward appearance of architectural beauty, yet whose interior tells of

care and cleanliness, almost approaching to charms. In fact, this village, with its rustic cottages and gardens, more particularly a selected few enclosed within—a sort of little park, and which were originally built for charitable purposes—offers one of the most effective pictures of rural simplicity that can well be conceived. The road still leads onwards through rich and well cultivated vales—not a spot but marks good land, and wealthy landlords—not a spot but that opens new beauties to the eye of him who travels through such favoured landscapes.

“ Little appearance of poverty or discontent, apparently, here,” said Frederick Passmore, “ truly, quite a rural district, though in the immediate neighbourhood of a commercial city—have you sent a delegate to such a place as this, Miravale? if so, I fancy you would find as little discontent as at Lindford; however, there is no knowing, the Golden Valley is not

always the vale of the heart's riches. Yet, methinks, peace could here be found with moderate means, if it can be found in merrie England, and if not there, 'tis useless to seek for it on earth. All the smiling suns of Italy—all the boasted climate of the south of France—all the humbug of Grecian liberty—all the clear blue skies and dark blue seas of the Mediterranean—all the so-called glories of the east—boldness of the best moors of the north—or heaths of the south—can never equal it in my mind—for without desire to be prejudiced, or make comparisons, I own to a patriotism of the most full extent—in all matters having reference to the natural advantages of my own country. And yet there is not a drawing-room, not a society—high or of lower degree—but that you will find some among the number there assembled, who will tell you their own is the last country in the world in which to live; and the sweet touching music of England, unfit to be

listened to by ears, which have once, perhaps, heard the notes of Italy."

But I must now leave the party, who, having spent a day of the utmost enjoyment amid such delightful pictures, to the comforts of rest, refreshment, and agreeable converse, and return to Jacob and his *protégé*, whom we left in the great city. I should prefer to linger in the prairies; but the battle of life must be fought on its own ground.


CHAPTER IX.

JACOB CLARKE sat beside Miss Winter on the sofa at her aunt's, in the New Road ; he had, by his consummate tact, already made himself agreeable to that aunt—a difficulty more easily overcome than that of approaching the affections, or, I should rather call it, the flattered

mind of a weak young woman, though ready to listen to and believe all that was uttered.

George Radstock, on the other hand, had meanwhile made rapid advances in the cause of chartism. He believed himself already a patriot—he believed he was born for the sole purpose of advocating the cause of his fellow man. Gelica Winter had said as much, and he believed it. In fact, heart and mind, character and time, he was prepared to devote to what he imagined to be his duty. It was, on his part, a weakness or madness, not a vice. He would have died for what he imagined was a right, and fancied himself a martyr in a just cause—so he went about obtaining signatures to the petition, and was not unsuccessful. Many signed for the fun of signing, they knew not what—others for unexplainable reasons—some four or five times—what mattered it, a petition is a petition. All it required was names, some signed for a penny,

some for sixpence, many for nothing, few with a knowledge or a care about the people or the people's charter, or ought save themselves; moreover, they understood little if anything about the matter. While George was thus engaged in his avocations of a delegate, and he had already become well known to many of those terming themselves chartist leaders, and others of inferior degree, dissatisfied and discontented beings, who, great as their real sufferings might be—at times unhappily are—prefer to join any cause, or any association through which the slightest glimpse of hope for the amelioration of their position arises, rather than give themselves the trouble by an honest endeavour to obtain work and employment, do their duty to themselves as to their fellow men—while George, I say, was engaged in the practical avocation of chartist agitation, Jacob, as in every act of life, was doing the best for himself. Not a jot cared he for chartism, much as he



cared for the funds which found their way into his pocket as an active delegate in the cause of agitation. And not in any much larger degree did he care for the girl who sat by his side, a willing listener to his flattery. Love and Jacob Clarke, save the love of self, were as unlikely to enter his heart as feeling into a bar of iron. Miss Winter, in his eyes, had she been the most lovely of her sex, would have solely been a lovely woman—or, in his estimation, a beautiful animal; but Miss Winter with two or three thousand pounds at her own disposal, and Jacob Clarke, with no solid or ostensible means of existence, save what he obtained as his share of the hard wrung means from the pockets of a deluded people, and the prospect of procuring for himself these thousands, were two different people. So he sat beside his victim, dressed in his best, and prepared to play his part.

“Permit me,” said Jacob, “to present you

and your fair sister with tickets for Astley's amphitheatre for this night. It may be possible that you have never visited a scene, where the animal horse exhibits reasoning powers, almost equal to those of the animal man. In fact, my sweet young lady, I do assure you the peers of the realm and the landed gentry play far more unreasonable pranks than do these docile and truly interesting animals; my friend, Mr. Greaves—the gambado of the company—a regular Geoffry, I assure you, has kindly placed tickets at my disposal. My friend, I may say our friend, George Radstock is engaged in his laudable avocations this morning, but he will be rejoiced,” said he, glancing at the younger girl, “he will be rejoiced to take charge of your sweet sister, if you will do me the felicity of accepting my humble services this evening.”

“Indeed, sir, you are most polite; it would give us, I am sure, great pleasure to accept of

your offer, but my aunt is somewhat particular, and, I fear, would never consent to our visiting a theatre without her. Had it been a concert of sacred music the case might, perhaps, have been different ; but even then the proposition must come from us, not as invited by you."

" Well, my dear lady, well let it be a concert at Exeter Hall—Jenny Lind, and all that sort of thing, or a bible meeting ; but come you must, we have set our hearts upon it. Indeed Astley's will be nothing with the Miss Winters absent. Now, my dear young lady," said he, turning to the younger girl, "do you not agree with me it would be sad to lose so good a chance of passing an agreeable evening?"

" Why as to that, sir, I own that I am—fond of seeing a display of animal instinct, and have not the slightest objection to your proposal, but be assured that we shall have some difficulty even in making our case good for a

concert. However, we will tell aunt that we have received an invitation, and leave the rest to chance. At what hour do you propose that we should go?"

"At seven, precisely, my sweet young lady. Shall we name the top of Regent street, we shall be there ready to meet you, anxiously awaiting your society?"

This point being settled, the door opened and Mrs. Simons made her appearance. Jacob immediately paid her the utmost attention, without naming the intended visit, and notwithstanding her original horror of such men, his tact enabled him very soon to become a favorite; and having listened to her persuasions and arguments, and believing in his entire respectability, the good woman, wise in her own opinions, but still no match for such a man as Jacob, consented that her nieces should spend the following evening with a respectable relation of Mr. Clarke.

Would that she had never done so, or having done so, that he who had made the request had been worthy of her confidence. The foolish and misled Miss Winter would then have had no cause to rue her future lot.

The evening came, the sun set in brilliancy to make way for a glorious moon, and at the appointed time the two girls, happy in the anticipation of a little pride and pleasure, hastened to the appointed place, and there, true to their time, stood Jacob, and George Radstock.

I have said that the cunning Mr. Clarke had already lost no time in complimenting Miss Winter as to her charms, and she, poor girl, who had been taught no better, be assured was no unwilling listener, and as they had paired off, Jacob with Miss Winter and George with his guiding star, they were at sufficient distance to admit of their conversation being unheard; and although George's head was full

of chartists and chartist delegates, the wrongs of the people, and so forth, his heart was an honest one, and the girl by his side was as safe in his companionship, perhaps far more so, than with any other living man.

While George was, therefore, cheerfully chatting on general subjects, Jacob was filling the ears of the eldest sister with fulsome compliments, leading her to believe that the position he held, if not one of wealth, it was at all events, one of great gentility, and that the wife of such a man would be a happy and a fortunate woman. Indeed she had fully come to this belief, when they arrived before the doors of the theatre, which, owing to some unusual exhibition, was much thronged, through which George and his fair companion had, nevertheless, made good their entry. In the meantime the moon shone forth brightly, and the sweet, false words of Jacob fell so thick on her ear, that on his proposing a moonlight

stroll in preference to the heated theatre, she forthwith agreed.

It would be uninteresting to detail the conversation which passed between these parties. It will suffice that on their returning to the entrance of the theatre, previous to the exit of the crowd, Jacob had plighted his vows to Miss Winter.

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